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Meet Miron: The company that's building Green Bay's biggest new developments

[Jeff Bollier](#), Green Bay Press-Gazette Published 4:25 p.m. CT Sept. 5, 2019 | Updated 12:54 p.m. CT Sept. 10, 2019

GREEN BAY - Think of a megaproject going on in Green Bay, and Miron Construction is there.

You can find the company's fencing up around Green Bay Packaging's new \$500 million mill, the \$93 million Brown County Expo Center, the Tittletown District and West De Pere schools, not to mention other smaller jobs.

In fact, the Fox Crossing-based company likes the Green Bay area so much it's decided to stay.

Chief Operating Officer Tim Kippenhan confirmed the company won't just build the 150,000-square-foot office building at Tittletown's northwest end, it'll be a tenant after the fences come down.

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Miron doesn't open up offices in every office it builds, but then again, Lambeau Field, a new expo center and one of the state's largest development areas will make for a pretty good view.

Kippenhan expects it will only get better. He expects Green Bay, which is already enjoying an "unprecedented" construction boom, will see several more large-scale developments—not all built by Miron—as soon as next year.

"You'll think you're in the big city," Kippenhan said. "Next summer's going to be pretty cool."



Tim Kippenhan, Miron
Construction chief operating officer and co-owner (Photo: Courtesy of Miron Construction)

Kippenhan is a third-generation co-owner of Miron. His grandfather, Roland, was one of Miron's five founders, and his father, Greg, is a former owner, as well. He joined Miron in 1993, starting in the warehouse before moving up to field estimation, engineering and project management.

In an interview with USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin, Kippenhan talked about how Miron ended up with nearly a quarter of its workforce on Green Bay area jobs and why it treats even the small jobs like they're a half-billion-dollar paper mill. The interview has been edited for space and clarity.

Tell us about the breadth of projects Miron is involved in in the Green Bay area.

There's a tremendous amount of different opportunities in the Green Bay marketplace, (that's) probably unprecedented over time. In the last 20 years, I don't think Green Bay has seen this amount of construction work, not only by Miron, but by all contractors.

Do you have a rough estimate of how many employees you have working in the Green Bay area right now?

I would estimate right now we probably have 350 individuals working specifically in the Green Bay marketplace.

What does it take for a construction company to respond to everything from the biggest of big to the smallest of small?

It really revolves around the philosophy we (adopted) over 30 years ago. We did not want to be stuck or focused on one type of construction because we don't have the crystal ball to show exactly where the economy is taking us.

We purposefully set out to have various different industries covered. Going forward, you have to learn and get that experience whether it's our project managers, our superintendents or our subcontractors, as well. We continue to really focus on taking care of every one of our clients, regardless of it's a \$1,000 job or a \$10 million job or a \$100 million job.



The new Green Bay Packaging mill is beginning to rise in August 2019, roughly one year after Miron Construction began work on the site. (Photo: Courtesy of Miron Construction)

How is Green Bay Packaging's new mill progressing?

Nicely. If you've seen what's happening, it took us a fair amount of time to get engineering in front of us and allow construction to take place. The interesting thing is that the equipment has been on order since last summer and is being made all over the world. Come October-November, things start getting shipped into Green Bay from all over the world.

RELATED: [The story behind Green Bay Packaging's plan for a new \\$580 million mill \(/story/news/2018/06/22/green-bay-packaging-expansion-local-wisconsin-aid-impact/717390002/\)](https://www.wisconsin-aid.com/news/2018/06/22/green-bay-packaging-expansion-local-wisconsin-aid-impact/717390002/)

The Green Bay Packaging project is expected to take until 2021 to finish. Is this as elaborate a project as it appears to be?

The intriguing thing is there are so many pieces of equipment and piping and electrical systems to make this entire process all work efficiently. The complexity only adds to it because you are taking vendors from all over the world and getting them to work together in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

It's a very big puzzle.

How did Miron react when Green Bay Packaging selected your bid to build a \$500 million mill?

We had the opportunity to work with Green Bay Packaging for eight years doing maintenance projects. When I talk about why the (smaller) projects are important for us, we did projects ranging from \$500 to \$20,000 for eight years developing that relationship, taking care of that customer. There was a comfort level between the parties that led us to this much larger project.

Changing speeds, what has Miron been responsible for in phases one and two of the Tiletown District?

Phase one, we had the opportunity to put in all site utilities and get the site prepped. We had the opportunity to build the Bellin clinic as well as the Ariens sledding hill and the park areas.

In phase two, for the last two months, we've been putting in utilities for all of the entire development. We're currently working on the podium project which is the parking area which will be underneath the future office building and apartment complex. After the podium is done, we will be building the office building on the northwest corner of that site.

RELATED: [Phase 2 of Green Bay Packers' Titletown District construction could begin in June \(/story/news/2019/04/15/phase-2-packers-titletown-district-construction-may-begin-june/3436458002/\)](https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/2019/04/15/phase-2-packers-titletown-district-construction-may-begin-june/3436458002/)

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Miron Construction works on the podium project, phase two of Titletown construction, Thursday, September 5, 2019, at west end of Titletown in Ashwaubenon, Wis. (Photo: Joshua Clark/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)

How does it feel to see thousands of people milling about in Titletown before a Packers game?

Anyone in the construction industry takes pride in what they build. (Titletown) goes back to the opportunities we had at Lambeau, starting back in 2000 with some of the renovation work and eventually all the renovation that has happened in the last six or seven years there.

There are thousands of people, whether it's at Miron or subcontractors, that raised their hand and said "I want to work at Lambeau, I want to work at Titletown" because that's what you see: you see families, you see friends going there and enjoying themselves.

Is the office building going to be a future home for Miron?

It may be no secret to some, but we have planned to be in the Titletown District for several years. We do anticipate taking space in that new (office) facility.

What are the challenges with a project like the Brown County Expo Center?

One is just the location of it: You're in the heart of a tremendous amount of activity with Lambeau Field, with the Resch Center.

While a lot of people will think of this as a large box, it is still a very complex, very large structural steel project. There has not been anything in the area that spans this type of space. It's something very special.

RELATED: [First look at the planned \\$93 million Brown County Expo Center \(/story/news/2019/03/11/brown-county-expo-center-first-look-93-million-project/3133113002/\)](https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/2019/03/11/brown-county-expo-center-first-look-93-million-project/3133113002/)

You'll also be working as construction manager for the West De Pere School District referendum renovations. What's involved with that project?

It's a little bit of everything in that school district which has been growing tremendously. We have worked for the last 20 years on four different referendums and construction in that district. Relying on past history and working together successfully.

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There's a lot of talk about bridging the skills gap. How has Miron kept its key talent?

That's always the magic question. Definitely the entire trades were affected in the recession. People have indicated anywhere from 20-25 percent of people left the industry, which was very impactful and we continue to feel it to this day.

The challenge at any contractor is trying to keep a consistent workforce and making sure you have work available rather than having highs and lows.

We've been fortunate with where the economy has been for the last seven to eight years. It's very consistent.

Does a period like Green Bay is having right now, does it stress or strain Miron's staffing?

We can plan for that and the skill sets of someone building a paper mill versus a K-12 educational facility is very different. We can plan for that.

The marketplace gets more difficult from a subcontractor standpoint. Fortunately, we have a tremendous base in Green Bay and the Fox Valley which ultimately puts the focus on working back home rather than Milwaukee and Madison.

What can northeastern Wisconsin or Wisconsin as a whole do to help keep getting people into trades and key jobs?



Crews stripped the facade from the Brown County Veterans Memorial Arena on July 9, 2019 (Photo: Richard Ryman/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)

I think continued education at home or in the schools that construction can be a great job; it is tough work, no doubt about that, but it provides great opportunities.

The technical schools and unions have all done a good job on trying to focus on that more. We all have to continue focusing on that as the workforce gets older. A lot of that will breed success as the economy stays in good shape and communities continue to invest, as well as corporations.

What would you tell someone who does not realize Miron's extensive history in the Green Bay community?

We've built our company on relationships and making sure we do the right thing for them. No project is too small. No project is too big. They all are important and they all add up to providing the great community that we live in.

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