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Whiteriver Construction

From Chicken Coop Builder to Regional Construction Powerhouse



Building great structures and great client relationships! From left: Corydon "Mike" Cooley, President of Whiteriver Construction; Ray Russell, Director of the Navajo Parks & Recreation Department; Jason R. Carter, CEO of Whiteriver Construction

It's one of the most remote communities in America, located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon on the Havasupai Reservation, 3,000 vertical feet from the top. The firm chosen to build teacher housing in the Village of Supai would face daunting construction challenges. Still, Whiteriver Construction was able to complete the project on time and within budget.

"Every person, every nail, every two-by-four had to be helicoptered in, because there is no road into Supai, just an eight-mile trail accessible only by foot or mule," recalls Jason R. Carter, CEO and co-owner of the Lakeside, Arizona-based company. "In fact, we even helicoptered in two cement mixers for concrete. And we quarried our own sand, gravel and stone from the dry wash and side of the canyon."

Challenging projects like this are all in a day's work for Whiteriver Construction, which began in 1994 as a small builder of chicken coops and barbed wire fences and has since grown into one of the largest general contractors in the Southwest. The company was founded by Corydon "Mike" Cooley, a businessman with more than 40 years of experience in the region who wanted to bring economic opportunity and jobs to the area.

Enterprising Spirit Is a Cooley Family Hallmark

Have you ever wondered how the town of Show Low, Arizona, got its name? It dates back to 1876, when Corydon Eliphalet Cooley won a 100,000-acre ranch in a card game by "showing low" – a deuce of clubs. Four years later, Cooley became Show Low's first postmaster.

Though Whiteriver Construction founder Corydon "Mike" Cooley never knew his famous forebear, he shares his enterprising spirit. "Like my great-grandfather, I take pride in my ability to create something out of nothing," he says.

Known for its ability to work within clients' budgetary constraints, quality workmanship, attention to detail, problem-solving ability and can-do attitude, Whiteriver Construction provides general contracting, construction management and design-build services for public and private clients in Arizona and New Mexico. Projects typically range from \$250,000 to \$12 million in size. Recent ones have included major renovations to the National Park Service Communication Center at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and an addition to the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park Visitor Center in Oljato-Monument Valley, Arizona.



The recently completed visitor center project at Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park

Whiteriver Construction has been ranked as one of the fastest-growing companies in the U.S. by Inc. magazine in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Carter, a self-described perfectionist, recalls a series of renovations and repairs at the Theodore Roosevelt School in Fort Apache, Arizona. Built in 1932, the school is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Carter and his team have always taken great pains to ensure that all their work is historically authentic. Brought in to rebuild a chimney, for example, they used perfectly matched stone from the original quarry. The firm recently completed a \$3.5 million renovation to the school.

Whatever the project, whatever the challenge, Whiteriver Construction's number one priority has always been "to serve our customers' needs to the best of our ability," Carter says. "Whether we're building a barbed wire fence to keep cows out of a school playground or constructing a housing complex in one of the most remote places in America, doing the best job possible, with the best people possible, is what we're all about."



From left: Corydon "Mike" Cooley, President of Whiteriver Construction; Jason R. Carter, CEO of Whiteriver Construction

Whiteriver Construction, Inc.

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