

TRANSACTIONS

Delco firm acquires West Chester company

Yerkes Associates, an engineering company over 100 years old, and Rhodes Insurance change hands

By Brian McCullough

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Two longtime private West Chester area companies recently agreed to be acquired.

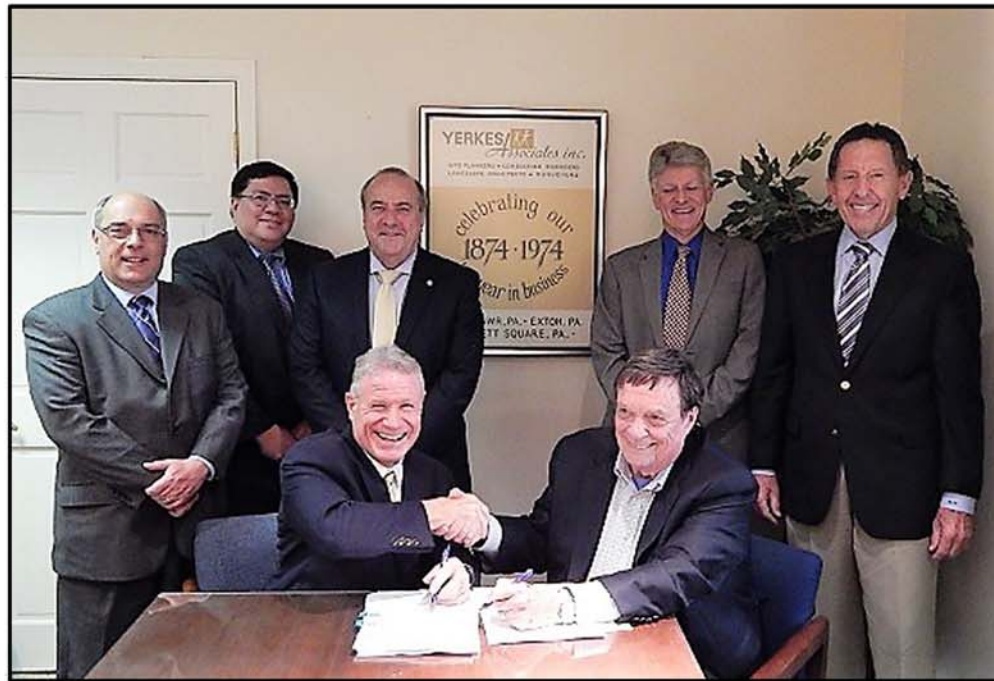
Cirilli Associates Inc. of Springfield, Delaware County, said last month it had purchased Yerkes Associates Inc. of West Chester.

Yerkes, established in 1874, is one of the oldest civil engineering and surveying firms in the country.

And on Thursday, Element Risk Management announced it had finalized the acquisition of Rhodes Insurance Agency Inc., which has been in business for more than 40 years. Both of those companies are located in the West Chester area.

Yerkes is marking 143 years in business. Founded as Land Surveyors, the firm has been led by Milton R. Yerkes, followed by John B. Yerkes Sr. and, most recently, by John B. Yerkes Jr.

John B. Yerkes Jr. is in his 56th year with the firm, having started on the survey crew at the company in 1961 and becoming its president in 1986. He will remain



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cirilli Associates Inc. of Springfield, Delaware County, recently acquired Yerkes Associates Inc. of West Chester. Shown, sitting from left, are: Nick Cirilli and John B. Yerkes Jr. Standing from left are: Harry Diakatos of GPCD Partners; Louis M. Kodumal and Vincent Mancini of the law offices of Vincent B. Mancini & Associates; attorney David Scott of Delaney & Scott; and Bob Riley of The Riley Co.

on staff as a consultant to the president and CEO, Nick Cirilli.

"I have said this many times before. The single most appealing reason for the acquisition is the fantastic people within Yer-

kes," Cirilli said. "They are always professional, always keeping our clients first. People make companies - not the other way around."

In June 2016, Yerkes announced it had appointed Nick Cirilli as its new

president and chief executive officer.

Cirilli started with Yerkes in November 2014 as the company's senior advisor, then quickly was appointed to executive vice president in June 2015. He has over 40 years of diversified experience in directing, managing, and engineering various structural/civil, municipal, industrial, institutional and residential-type projects, the company said in making the announcement last year.

In 1990 Cirilli started and is still president of Cirilli Associates Inc. in Springfield, an engineering and management consulting company.

Cirilli Associates had been providing structural engineering services to Yerkes since 2011. The two companies said last year they were developing the framework for a permanent merger.

Yerkes remains organizationally unchanged with the exception that it is wholly owned by Cirilli Associates.

In acquiring Rhodes, Element Risk Management said it will strengthen its footprint in Chester County and southeastern Pennsylvania.

Rhodes Insurance Agency will continue operations at its 810 Downingtown Pike location. All staff has been retained.

"We really tried hard to make sure that our client and staff were headed to a place that not only maintained the level of service we delivered, but enhanced it," said Mike DeSeve, president at Rhodes. "We believe our business and our firm will be in great hands with Element Risk for many more generations to come."

Josh Heebner, partner at Element Risk Management, said the acquisition raises his company's area profile.

"Through this acquisition we should solidify ourselves as the trusted name in insurance and risk management in West Chester and throughout Chester County," Heebner said.

Element Risk Management Group is located in the 100 block of East Chestnut Street in West Chester.