



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Harkins Vice President Ben Nichols Promoted to President**

Harkins is pleased to announce the promotion of Ben Nichols to President. This change in leadership is the first step of a succession planning process that began 10 years ago in anticipation of our current CEO Gary Garofalo and current COO Larry Kraemer's upcoming retirements. Over the next two years, Ben will work closely with Gary as Harkins continues to execute its succession plan and will ultimately assume the role of CEO in 2024 upon Gary's retirement.

Ben joined Harkins in 2016 as a project executive of the government group. He was promoted to vice president in 2020 and began overseeing the commercial group and human resources department the following year. In Ben's former role, he was responsible for preconstruction and construction operations, along with planning, coordinating, and executing business development efforts. In his nine years of industry experience, Ben has worked on many successful projects in public and private sectors of various markets, including mission critical, military, office, healthcare, hospitality, and multifamily housing. Prior to entering the civilian world, he graduated from the Naval Academy and served in the Marine Corps as a combat engineer officer from 2008-2013.

Harkins has been preparing for this change in leadership through extensive succession planning and a five-year strategy that will continue through 2025. Both plans include leadership roles and the next generation of employees that will assume executive positions. The company firmly believes in grooming leadership from within, recruiting youthful top talent that can continue to expand professionally as Harkins evolves. An integral partner in Harkins' future plans, GAME Founder and UMBC Graduate Program Director Gib Mason has been facilitating the organization's Emerging Leaders Program since 2012, a specialized curriculum that focuses on providing over 75 employee-owners the ability to develop management and leadership skills while fully immersing themselves in all aspects of the company. *"I've been working with Harkins' executive leadership team for over 10 years," says Gib. "I have facilitated their Emerging Leaders Program and have been heavily involved in the preparation of the 2025 strategic plan. Most recently, we established a five-year program designed to leverage the strengths of nine executives and bond them together to move Harkins well into the future and determine the successor CEO. All nine leaders have complimentary skills, and one person was in the right place to lead this group, it's Ben."*

The discipline, planning, and execution of Ben's work and the vision he brings to Harkins is unprecedented, making him well-suited to lead the company into the next generation of growth. *"He is an exceptional leader that works well to find common solutions among all team members he works with," says CEO Gary Garofalo. "Whether it be internally or externally, I believe Ben will excel at making and maintaining long-term partnerships that have been the foundation of our success for over 56 years."*

With its increased capacity for building and generational change in executive leadership, Harkins will continue to advance at all levels of the company, providing abundant opportunities to grow as the talents, ambition, and drive of its employee-owners thrive.



*Ben Nichols, Harkins President*

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***About Harkins Builders, Inc.***

*Founded in 1965, Harkins is a 100% employee-owned construction company serving clients engaged in the development of multifamily, commercial, and government projects. The leader in the markets it serves, Harkins credits its success to the shared values that guide its work and relationships with all partners involved. The company offers customized services, such as preconstruction, that go above and beyond what is expected in the industry. Harkins is proud to be part of the communities it serves, with regional offices positioned along the eastern seaboard. The company is headquartered in Columbia, MD, and has additional locations in Wayne, PA and Charlotte, NC.*