

Beutler has a new name and a dramatic story of resurrection

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Five years Beutler Corp. sold its name and part of its business in a bid to stay alive. Now the Sacramento Company has rechristened itself as it moves to reclaim the work it gave up in the depths of the recession.

Now known as Villara Corp., the Sacramento company installs, maintains and repairs solar, HVAC, plumbing and other systems, mostly in single-family homes. Last week, it began providing residential maintenance service again.

Company president Rick Wylie said it's a full-circle moment for the company, which began operations 68 years ago.

"We are coming out of a very difficult economic period," he said, noting during the recession, his employee base dropped below 300. "Now we've just gone over 700 again."



The recession was particularly hard on companies like Wylie's, as the downturn in housing meant less demand for installation. In 2010, Beutler decided to sell its residential service business, along with its name, to ARS, a national company. At the time, Wylie said, those services were only about 6 percent of his company's business.

The company continued to operate under its old name, but under a five-year non-compete clause could not offer the residential service that ARS was providing as Beutler Air Conditioning and Plumbing.

With the end of that period, company directors said it was time to make a clean break with the old name. "One reason is just the confusion of two different companies with the same name operating in the same space," Wylie said. "And secondly, at the end of the no-compete period, we needed to enter the paid residential service again."

With help from a Texas firm, the former Beutler renamed itself Villara beginning in April. Wylie said the name plays on the word "villa," a synonym for home, where the company provides services. More practically, he said, "In today's world if you don't invent a name you don't have (Internet) domain space."

Wylie said it was also important to have a name and brand that employees liked. Going forward, he said, he expects the company to have a new surge of business as homebuilders go into big production again, as well as servicing homes between two and 10 years old that have company systems installed.