Gold'n Plump Chicken CEO to Retire After 40 Years

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ST. CLOUD, Minn. (AP) — After almost a lifetime in the chicken business and 21 years as a CEO, Mike Helgeson is retiring from the company that produces Gold'n Plump chicken.

Helgeson is stepping down from St. Cloud-based GNP Co. effective Nov. 3. Executive Vice President Steve Jurek, who's been with the organization 37 years, will take over as president.

"After 40 years of being in the business full-time, after graduating from college in 1974, and also being CEO for 21 years, I thought the time was right for me to retire," the 62-year-old Helgeson told the St. Cloud Times [1] for a story published Wednesday.

Helgeson said he's been working for the company his grandfather started in 1926 since he was 10. The company now processes 100 million chickens annually and counts among its major partners Chipotle, Famous Dave's, Target and Wal-Mart. Employment has grown by more than 1,000 to about 1,700 employees and 350 family-farm partners during his tenure. During the same period, sales have tripled to more than $400 million annually.

GNP Co. and its subsidiaries — including three chicken-processing plants, two hatcheries and two feed mills — were sold last December to The Maschhoffs of Carlyle, Illinois.

The decision to retire was Helgeson's, said Jason Logsdon, CEO of Maschoff Family Foods, who commended him on "the strong company, leaders and team he is leaving behind."

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