

51+ CONSTRUCTION DESIGN

FEB | MAR 2026

Cookin' in Cache Valley

Weber Blackstone's new headquarters includes scintillating natural and industrial design elements from its "backyard" location in Providence.

- + Delta Sky Club
- + Water Conservancy District Roundup
- + Deer Valley East Village
- + AGC Convention Recap

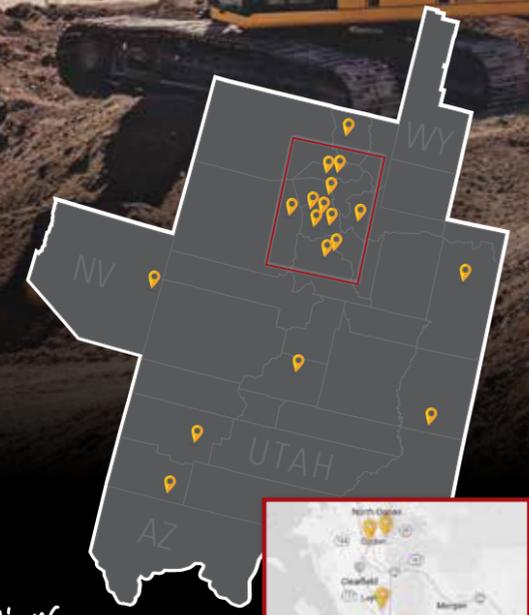
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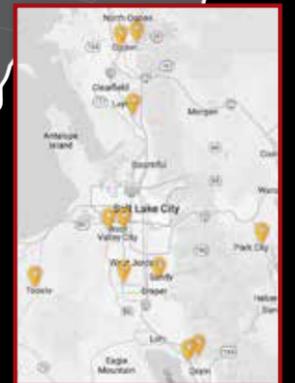


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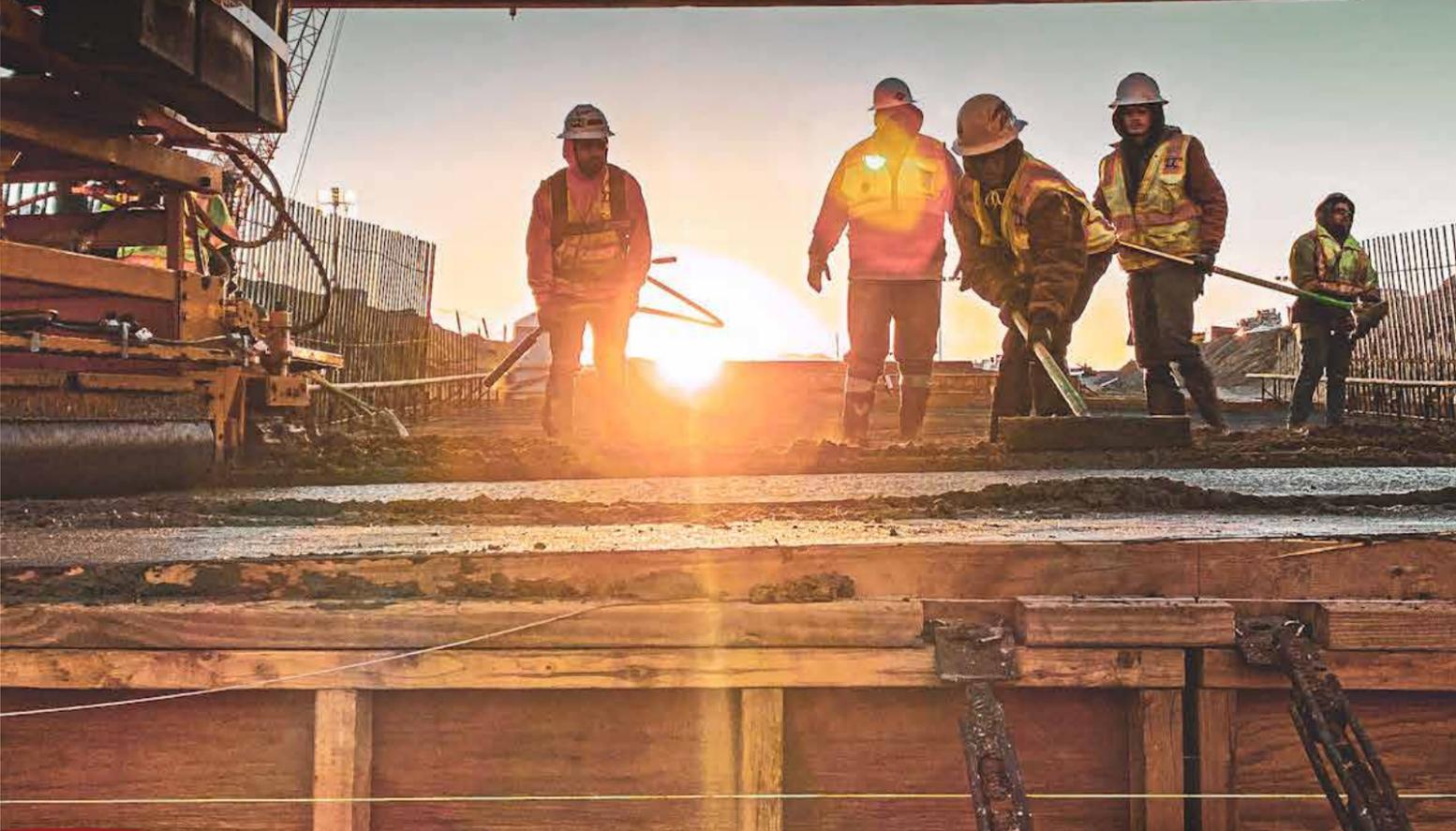
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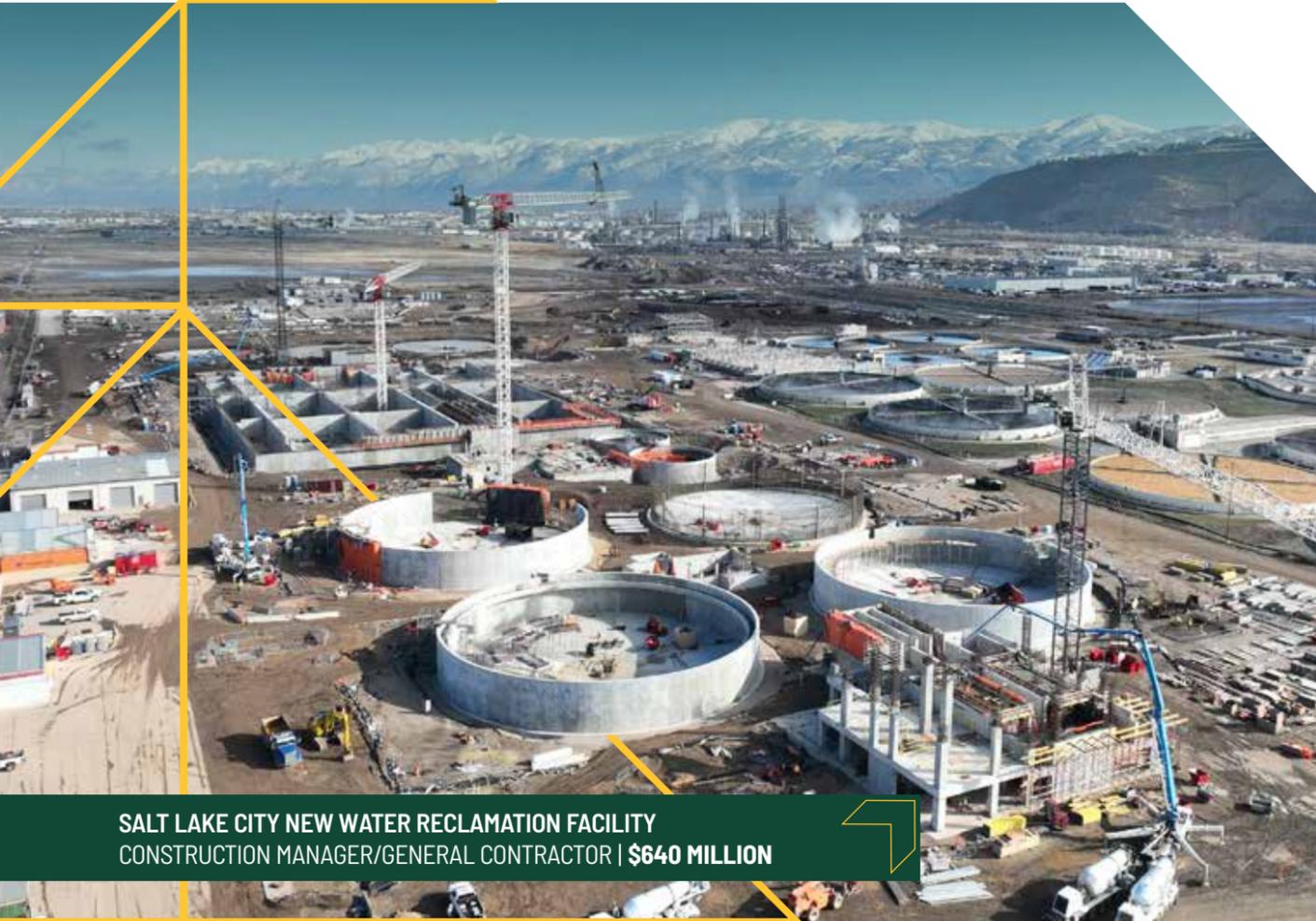
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AE URBIA is a past recipient of both architect and engineer of the year from the TCA and are in the top 20 of the World's Most Influential Tilt-up Professionals. AE URBIA has raised the bar for the design and engineering of tilt-up construction.



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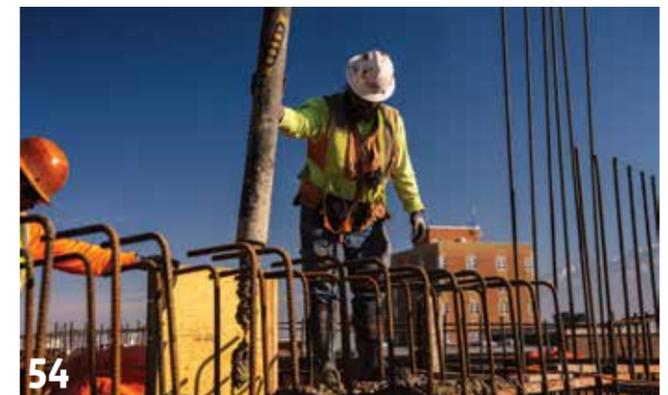
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On the cover: Design from Jacoby Architects and construction led by R&O Construction combined to deliver an impressive new corporate headquarters for the newly merged Weber Blackstone. The exterior Prodema wood paneling system was designed to give the impression that the building takes flight from its Providence location. (Image courtesy R&O Construction)

40
YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION EXCELLENCE

Utah's Diverse Economic Train Rolls On

The world, even the nation, could be on fire—speaking metaphorically about the economy (mostly)—and as long as those flames don't encroach upon the borders of the Beehive State, all is well in Zion.

That said, the **2026 Economic Outlook** (page 24) offers a favorable outlook for the commercial design and construction industry. Specifics include potential interest rate cuts (don't get your hopes up), Utah's expected "moderate" 1.5% growth (still positive, despite slower birth rates and projected dips in in-migration), difficult housing prices, and a state that is banking on energy and data center projects as immeasurably important to the state's future economic growth.

As a publication, we're excited to begin our 14th year covering Utah's commercial A/E/C industry. It's a bustling market, one that offers no shortage of compelling projects and unique industry trends to report on. Something called A.I. is emerging... I think...

This issue of **Utah Construction + Design** includes two projects with over-the-top design elements and incredible interior spaces: the new **Delta Sky Club—Concourse B** at the Salt Lake International Airport (page 28), and **Weber Blackstone's** new **Corporate Headquarters** in Providence (page 40). I toured the Delta Sky Club in December and—OMG—it's seriously one of the most jaw-dropping spaces I've ever seen.

Other editorial content includes a deep dive into what Utah's largest respective water conservancy districts are planning (**Tick Tock From the Water Clock**, page 54) as the state currently grips from an unprecedented lack of snow, with a grim outlook inevitable if these "winters" (I've shoveled snow exactly once this year—February 18) continue producing 30%-50% of normal precipitation.

We also look at **Deer Valley East Village** (page 72), and the incredible amount of work being done by New York-based **Extell Development Company** to transform Mayflower Mountain into something truly special along the Wasatch Back.

Two firms celebrating anniversaries this year are featured in this issue: Salt Lake-based **New Star General Contractors** marks 40 years (page 36); and Spanish Fork-based **KMA Architects** celebrates its 30th (page 50). Congratulations to both firms on these significant milestones!

And, as a primer of things to come, we have another almost-20 firms celebrating anniversaries in 2026, so we're looking forward to a ton of great historical content throughout the year!

I always look forward to my favorite industry convention each January—the **Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Utah's** annual shindig every third week of the month at Little America. This year's 104th event (page 64) saw **Gary Ellis**, President/CEO of Salt Lake-based **Jacobsen Construction**, installed as 2026 Chairman.

The AGC also paid tribute to **Doug Watts**, former President of St. George-based **Watts Construction**, presenting him with the coveted Eric W. Ryberg Award, a well-deserved honor. Doug served as the 2014 Chairman and is someone I've known for a long time and consider a friend.

Finally, we pay homage in our A/E/C People section (page 18) to two local industry icons who recently passed away: **Steve Crane**, a top-shelf architect—the 'C' in VCBO Architecture—and **Ralph L. Wadsworth**, a renowned structural engineer-turned general contractor titan who founded the heavy-highway company that bears his name and celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

These individuals define the caliber of professionals that exist in droves within the A/E/C + CRE realm, and it's the core reason as to why Utah remains a preeminent state to do business and why the commercial design and construction market continues to thrive. They built legacies on integrity and innovation and worked extremely hard to execute their vision of success.

Keep on keepin' on!

Regards,



Bradley Fullmer



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HB Workplaces headquarters and showroom entrance in Draper. (image courtesy HB Workplaces, A COR Company)

COR Acquires HB Workplaces

Architecture Belgique, Bonneville Builders celebrate Victory Heights ribbon-cutting; Central States opens Tooele manufacturing plant; Ogden-Hinckley Airport expands terminal.

Creative Office Resources (COR), a MillerKnoll Certified Dealer headquartered in Boston, announced the acquisition of HB Workplaces, a well-established MillerKnoll Certified Dealer with six office locations in the western region, including Salt Lake City, St. George, Boise, Las Vegas, Reno, and Seattle.

HB Workplaces will now operate as HB Workplaces, A COR Company, with Creative Office Resources serving as the parent organization.

This acquisition, effective January 14th, represents a significant milestone in COR's continued geographic expansion and long-term growth strategy. Since 1980, HB Workplaces has earned a strong reputation

for delivering furniture solutions, interior construction, and more to clients across the Western United States. Supported by a team of more than 170 professionals, the firm is known for bringing clients' vision and goals into focus and creating modern workplaces that reflect how people work today, serving people and organizations across a diverse range of industries.

"HB Workplaces brings decades of expertise and a strong regional presence, making them a natural partner for COR," said Denise Horn, CEO and Partner of COR, a Women's Business Enterprise National Council-certified Women's Business Enterprise. "By joining forces, we can continue to leverage our combined strengths to deliver innovative, client-focused workplace solutions nationally. Our teams have collaborated for years, and we're excited about the opportunities this

acquisition creates for our clients and the communities we serve."

This expansion strengthens COR's ability to combine national resources with local insight, ensuring clients benefit from trusted expertise and exceptional service.

"Creative Office Resources and HB Workplaces share a longstanding dedication to designing spaces that perform at the highest level," said John Michael, President of the Americas, MillerKnoll. "This acquisition strengthens HB Workplaces' ability to deliver strategic insights and innovative solutions, empowering clients across offices, education and healthcare facilities to meet the evolving demands of today's work environments."

HB Workplaces will now operate as HB Workplaces, A COR Company, with Creative Office Resources serving as the parent organization. COR will provide

strategic support to ensure a seamless experience for clients and employees, as HB Workplaces continues to serve their clients and industry partners with the same focus and expertise.

"Joining COR is an exciting step for HB Workplaces and our team," said David Colling, Principal and CEO of HB Workplaces. "We've long valued our relationship with the COR team, sharing knowledge as fellow MillerKnoll partners for decades. This partnership allows us to provide clients with even greater resources and support while maintaining the personal relationships and local focus that define our approach. We look forward to growing together and delivering exceptional workplace experiences."

Victory Heights Adaptive Reuse Project Celebrates Ribbon-Cutting

Architecture Belgique, Bonneville Builders, and various members of the project team celebrated a ribbon-cutting for Victory Heights, an 88-unit adaptive reuse multifamily project opened in Salt Lake's East Central neighborhood.

Blazer Ventures led a stellar project team as the developer transforming the 70s-era medical office building into affordable housing.

"Why did we do an adaptive reuse, affordable housing project?" asked Brandon Blaser, Founder & President of Blazer Ventures, during the celebratory

speeches. "Because we didn't know any better. We were dumb enough to try."

The developer's tongue-in-cheek remarks came before he revealed the purpose of assembling such an impressive roster of funding partners and operators—Volunteers of America - Utah, BCG Arc Fund, Utah Housing Corporation (UHC), Goldman Sachs, KeyBank, Olene Walker Housing Fund, and the SLC Redevelopment Agency (RDA)—"It's not about the numbers, it's about the individuals and families."

While the final funding pieces for Victory Heights arrived in 2023, David Dameschen, President & CEO of UHC, said the project has been 15 years in the making with the RDA, praising the project for "the security and safety that [residents] will find here; the comfort [residents] will enjoy."

Designed by Architecture Belgique, team members Guillaume Belgique, Principal, and Mike Ackley, Senior Associate, said the office-to-multifamily conversion and new addition above an existing parking structure made for a challenge. However, the "good bones" of the concrete and steel structure, the two said, made for a solid canvas for their design magic—with an expansive exterior mural for added flair.

Bonneville Builders, the project's general contractor, fully remodeled the outdated office into 66 studios and 22 units with three- and four-bedroom floor plans for residents, of which 60% are already leased, according to property managers

EMG. Shared amenities include an interior clubhouse, bike storage, and an exterior courtyard. Unit amenities include quartz countertops that receive impressive daylighting, modern finishes, and stylish cabinetry in the open kitchens. The project is all-electric and Energy Star rated above 90%, and represents a growing trend of rehabbing offices in Salt Lake's East Central neighborhood for multifamily use, joining the award-winning Arbor 515, another Belgique-Bonneville collaboration.

Central States Opens New Manufacturing Plant in Tooele

Central States, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of metal building products, has opened its newest manufacturing facility in Tooele, Utah. The 100,000-SF plant—its 13th nationwide and westernmost location to date—represents a multimillion-dollar investment in the community and is expected to create more than 90 jobs.

"This facility is more than just a building—it represents our commitment to growth, innovation, and the strength of employee ownership," said Central States CEO Jim Sliker. "We're proud to invest in Tooele and excited to welcome new employee-owners to our family."

The expansion supports Central States' rapidly growing pre-engineered metal building (PEMB) business, along with its roofing and siding, post-frame, >>



Eva Lopez Chavez (left), Salt Lake City Councilwoman, and Steve Waldrip (right), Sr. Advisor for Housing Strategy and Innovation in the Office of Governor Cox, cut the ceremonial ribbon to celebrate Victory Heights in SLC. (Photo by Brady Dunn, Dunn Communications courtesy Bonneville Builders)



Central States, a large national manufacturer of metal building products, opened a new 100,000-SF plant in Tooele, its 13th plant in the U.S. and westernmost location to date. (courtesy Central States)

self-storage, living spaces, and metal components operations. The Tooele facility will manufacture a range of residential and commercial roof and wall panels in multiple gauges, an extensive selection of trim, and structural purlins. The plant will also produce the Alpha Framing System, a proprietary framing solution that installs faster than traditional methods and is available exclusively through Elevate Structures, a Central States company.

The Tooele opening marks the first time in company history that Central States has launched two manufacturing facilities in the same year. In August 2025, the company celebrated the opening of its frame and structural steel plant in Springdale, Arkansas, under its Central States Building Works division.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony brought together company leaders, local and state officials, and community members at the facility in the Peterson Industrial Depot.

Tooele Mayor Debbie Winn and EDCUtah Executive Director Ryan Starks both spoke at the event, highlighting the company's investment in the region and its positive impact on local employment and economic growth.

"EDCUtah was proud to support Central States Manufacturing during the

site selection process, and we're grateful to celebrate this milestone with them," Starks said. "The jobs created here will bring meaningful benefits to Tooele residents and surrounding communities."

Ogden-Hinckley Airport's New Terminal a Boon to Region

Local city officials from the Ogden-Weber area celebrated the ribbon-cutting of a newly expanded and renovated terminal at Ogden-Hinckley Airport—a project designed to modernize the aging facility and position it for future commercial growth.

The \$4.4 million project represents one of the most visible investments in the airport in decades. Originally built in the 1950s, the terminal had lagged behind modern passenger expectations. City leaders said the renovation was intended not only to improve the travel experience but also to make the airport more attractive to commercial carriers considering service in northern Utah.

Designed by Sanders Associates Architects and built by Kier Construction, both of Ogden, the expansion focused on both functionality and aesthetics. Improvements included a larger ticketing area, upgraded passenger waiting spaces, and a new indoor baggage claim

— a significant upgrade from previous arrangements that exposed travelers to the elements.

The project also reconfigured the terminal frontage, improving traffic flow for passenger pickup and drop-off while enhancing accessibility to meet current ADA standards. Exterior improvements and architectural updates were designed to give the airport a more contemporary identity.

Construction began in early 2025 and progressed through the year, with crews working to minimize disruptions to ongoing airport operations.

City leaders also view the terminal upgrade as a foundational step in repositioning Ogden-Hinckley Airport as a viable regional alternative to larger hubs.

The improved facility is intended to support efforts to attract additional commercial air service, expand charter operations, and accommodate emerging aviation technologies.

Officials have also tied the airport's future to broader regional growth and long-term planning, including anticipated economic development along the Wasatch Front and the expected influx of visitors tied to Utah's selection as host of the 2034 Winter Olympics. ■



Kier Construction and Sanders Associates Architects teamed up to deliver the new \$4.4 million expansion/upgrade of the Ogden-Hinckley Airport Terminal last November. (courtesy Kier Construction)

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Ralph L. Wadsworth and Steve Crane Remembered

City Creek Construction hires Dan Chambers; Layton Construction elevates multiple executives; HOK hires Schneider and Barkau; Architectural Nexus welcomes Amy Watson as newest Principal; Calder Richards Structural Engineers promotes David Marshall to Partner; FFKR Architects announces new Associates and Sr. Associate; MSR Design promotes Utah-based teammates.



(From left to right) Draper Mayor Troy Walker, Con Wadsworth, Ralph Wadsworth, Ty Wadsworth, Tod Wadsworth pose as Draper presents Ralph with an award for Bear Canyon Bridge.

In Memory—Ralph L. Wadsworth

A true titan of the design and construction industry in the Beehive State, **Ralph Lester Wadsworth**, 91, founder of Draper-based **Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction**, passed away December 25, 2025, in the Draper home he built with his own hands.

Wadsworth was born on November 4, 1934, in Taylor, Idaho, to Lawrence and Hilda Wadsworth. The youngest of five children, he grew up in a farming community founded by his Mormon pioneer ancestors and learned the value of hard work at an early age, including working in construction for his brother, Golden. He attended Idaho Falls High School, where he met his sweetheart and wife of 71 years, Peggy Kahler.

Wadsworth attended the University of Idaho in Moscow on a boxing scholarship, which helped him earn a Bachelor of Structural Engineering degree. He soon proved his mettle as a talented structural designer and plied his craft for other Salt

Lake-based firms before founding Ralph L. Wadsworth Structural Engineering in 1962 in Salt Lake City. He designed many high-rise office buildings in Salt Lake, as well as several LDS temples, including the Washington, D.C. Temple.

By the mid-70s, Wadsworth realized he could make a better living as a general contractor and founded Ralph L. Wadsworth (RLW) Construction in 1975.

Over the past 50-plus years, RLW Construction has built a reputation as a premier heavy/highway contractor in the Intermountain West, specializing in highway and bridge construction and building projects throughout Utah, Idaho, Arizona, and Montana. The firm is renowned for its Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) expertise, which has included the use of self-propelled modular transporters and, more recently, bridge slide technology. This ability to build a superstructure to the side and then carefully move it into place has

helped revolutionize bridge construction in the state.

Wadsworth was widely recognized for his achievements in the construction industry, including being honored by the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Utah with the Eric W. Ryberg Award for lifetime achievement in 2021.

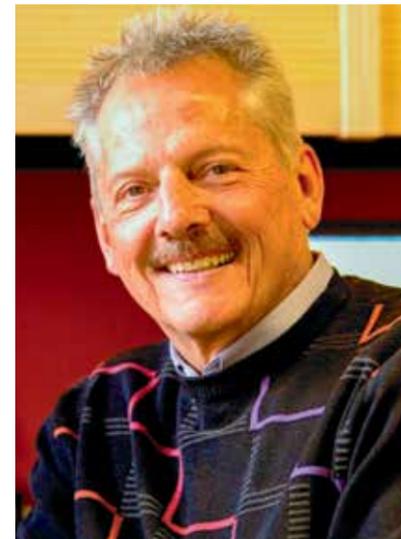
In his later years, Wadsworth started a real estate development company in partnership with some of his sons—Wadsworth Development Group—which has had significant success over its 30-year history.

Despite his success, he was a humble man and recognized his faults. He wrote in his autobiography: “I know I could have been a better husband, a better father, and a better Christian. Having a loving wife, raising seven boys, and having our boys and their families close to us is about as much blessing as I could ask for.”

His children said that although one

could question his methodology, patience, and temperament, it’s hard to argue with the results of his parenting, even if he doesn’t get many style points.

Wadsworth was preceded in death by his wife of 71 years, Peggy Wadsworth, who passed away on July 1, 2025. He is survived by his seven sons—Guy, Cal, Con, Tod, Kip, Ty and Nic; their spouses, as well as 21 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren.



In Memory—Steve Crane

Utah’s A/E/C community lost a true character in renowned architect **Steven Harold Crane**, 77, who passed away on September 21, 2025.

As a co-founder of Salt Lake-based **VCBO Architecture**, Crane was known for his engaging, confident personality, his vast collection of sweaters, and his passion for K-12 design.

Born in Draper to Louise and Harold Crane, Steve discovered his passion for architecture at just eight years old. He graduated from Skyline High School in 1966 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Utah, before eventually co-founding VCBO Architecture—proudly recognized as the “C” of the company.

Crane was known for his creativity, mentorship, and adventurous spirit. He volunteered with the Park City Ski Patrol for more than 40 years, sharing his quick wit,

warmth, and kindness with everyone he met.

Co-workers shared the following:

- He was an imaginative, “big-picture” thinker who was instrumental to the firm’s early growth and helped establish the firm’s K-12 education practice, instilling a culture of pro bono, human-centered design that continues to guide the firm.
- He was known for his warmth, wit, and generosity of spirit.



VCBO’s original founders (from left to right) Steve Crane, Sean Onyon, Niels Valentiner, and Peter Brunjes.

- His memory will continue to inspire us—as colleagues and as a firm—and we will miss him dearly.

Crane is survived by his daughter, Chandler (Timothy); his son, Creighton; his granddaughter, Harlow; and his sisters, Cheryl and Cheri (Steve).

Steve often joked that he “sucked at retirement”, and true to form, he kept creating until the end. His legacy lives on in the buildings he designed, the lessons he shared, and the memories cherished by those who loved him.

Dan Chambers has stepped into the role of Vice President of Business Development and Partnership Growth at Bountiful-based **City Creek Construction**, bringing with him a rare blend of strategic vision, relationship mastery, and deep operational experience.

For over two decades, Chambers helped shape and scale Tech Connect—where he led business development efforts

that opened doors into major education, healthcare, and institutional markets.

His work generated tens of millions in revenue through high-trust partnerships, long-term relationship building, and the execution of mission-critical infrastructure projects, including complex backup power and resiliency systems.

Beyond construction and technology, Chambers has consulted with organizations on leadership, identity development, and

organizational design—helping teams align who they are with the legacy they aim to build.

Layton Construction and its parent company, **STO Building Group**, announced major changes to executive leadership.

Paul Drecksel has been named President of STO Building Group (STOBG). Layton Construction became a member of the STOBG family of builders with the 2019 company merger. With this new appointment, Drecksel will transition to STOBG’s New York City headquarters to work with CEO Bob Mullen and Executive Chairman Jim Donaghy in overseeing and managing the strategic direction of the firm, one of the nation’s top five largest commercial construction organizations.

Drecksel has been with Layton since 2013 and served as Chief Operating Officer since 2020. Under his leadership, Layton’s revenue grew from \$1.5 billion to more than »

\$7 billion in 2025. He's overseen one of the industry's best safety programs, which recently earned the Associated General Contractors of America's most prestigious national safety award. He's also helped lead the Western Division of STOBG, which includes Layton, Abbott Construction, and Structure Tone Southwest.

Levi Clegg, who joined the firm four years ago as Vice President and Associate General Counsel, was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Clegg has distinguished himself as an attorney, leader, and critical thinker since joining the firm. He took on high-consequence risk matters and supported Layton's business unit leaders in negotiating and structuring project contracts. He also led Layton's internal project evaluation process.

"Leadership potential doesn't always announce itself through longevity," said Jeff Layton, CEO and President of Layton, of Clegg's elevation. "Sometimes, it shows up fast."

Jeff Beecher is retiring after more than 30 years with the company. Beecher's career at Layton spanned Utah and Arizona, most recently as an Executive Vice President. When Layton expanded its Phoenix business in the late 1990s, he and his family relocated to establish the company's culture there. Years later, he returned to Utah to lead the company's largest business unit, traveling weekly to do so.

"I knew we needed to 'Laytonize' Phoenix," said Layton. "Jeff and his family moved to help with that assignment. When we needed him back in Salt Lake, he accepted again."

Dave Whimpey has been appointed Executive Vice President. He steps into the role after years of working and learning it alongside Beecher. Whimpey's own 27-year career at Layton followed a similar path: growth through assignments that demanded flexibility and a willingness to relocate.



Dan Chambers



Paul Drechsel



Levi Clegg



Jeff Beecher



Dave Whimpey



Tonya Schneider



Cullan Barkau



Amy Watson

"Dave has always been eager to take on new assignments, including opportunities that required him and his family to travel," Layton said. "He's a great example of a leader taking the necessary steps to prepare for future leadership opportunities."

HOK recently made personnel moves, hiring **Tonya Schneider** and **Cullan Barkau**.

Schneider will serve as a Project Manager, bringing sharp design insight and passion for sports and entertainment architecture to the firm's Salt Lake office. She is a licensed architect with a dynamic and impactful portfolio of projects designed over her 13 years of experience in the A/E/C industry. Her career spans higher education, civic developments, high-rises, and major sports venues, with a particular focus on large-scale athletic facilities.

Before joining HOK, Schneider helped deliver high-profile athletic projects for Utah's major universities and professional sports organizations. Among her standout

projects are the recently completed Utah Valley University's UCCU Soccer Stadium and developments for Real Salt Lake.

Barkau is a licensed architect with nearly a decade of experience in the architecture and engineering design industry. With a Bachelor of Civil Engineering, he began his career in transportation engineering in Denver. Driven by a passion for design and placemaking, he returned to school to earn a Master of Architecture, with a focus on sports and entertainment venues.

Barkau's career has spanned multiple sectors, including mountain resort, aviation, and sports venue architecture. He has contributed to high-profile projects such as the United States Air Force Academy Falcon Stadium Expansion, Dallas Cotton Bowl Renovation, and Wasatch Peak Ranch Resort in Utah.

Since joining HOK, he has expanded his role beyond project delivery to include business development, aiming to grow HOK's presence throughout Utah.

Salt Lake-based **Architectural Nexus** welcomed **Amy Watson** as its newest Principal. She brings a wealth of experience in designing public spaces that inspire community, curiosity, and connection.

Watson's path to architecture began long before she even knew the term. Growing up in a small town in Illinois, she spent countless hours at her local library, where librarians saved new books just for her. That library became her second home and sparked a lifelong fascination with how spaces can shape human experience.

Her love for libraries deepened in high school, where she worked part-time shelving books. When her town raised funds for a new library, the architect took

the entire staff, including Watson, on tours of public libraries around Chicago. That experience solidified her calling: to design places that spark curiosity, foster community, and leave a lasting impact.

Sustainability is deeply connected to stewardship, she believes, saying, "The most sustainable building is the one that already exists." She loves revitalizing older or historic structures to meet society's needs, and each adaptive reuse project becomes a way to honor community history while preparing for the future.

Salt Lake-based **Calder Richards Structural Engineers** announced the promotion of **David Marshall**, S.E., to Partner, recognizing

his leadership, technical expertise, and long-standing commitment to the firm, its clients, and the structural engineering profession.

Marshall is known for his thoughtful, detail-oriented approach to every project he undertakes. He brings a high level of care to ensuring the architect's vision is fully realized through coordinated, constructible documents that reduce risk and minimize costly change orders. A collaborative team player, Marshall values the role each discipline plays in the design process. He believes strong communication and responsiveness are essential to project success, as evidenced throughout his portfolio of impactful projects across>>

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market sectors, including West High School, Granary Campus, and the Summit County Sheriff's and Attorneys' Office.

"David consistently elevates both our projects and our teams," said Shaun Packer, Managing Partner at Calder Richards. "His attention to detail, responsiveness, and genuine investment in our clients and colleagues make him an exceptional leader and a natural choice for Partner."

As a new Partner, Marshall is focused on expanding Calder Richards' visibility within the A/E/C industry and the broader community, strengthening client relationships, and supporting the firm's continued growth. He is particularly passionate about improving internal communication, enhancing efficiency through thoughtful process refinement, and mentoring younger engineers to help cultivate future leaders within the firm.

Salt Lake-based **Talisman Civil Consultants** recently expanded its capabilities to better support clients with the addition of **Craig McKennon** as a Senior Right-of-Way Agent.

He brings 38 years of experience in real estate, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, corridor preservation, title curative, easement negotiations, land use analysis, and complex utility/energy sector ROW work.

His background includes major projects with Rocky Mountain Power, Williams Northwest Pipeline, Marathon Pipeline, Questar Gas, Kern River Gas Transmission, and numerous municipalities across Utah and the West.

With McKennon on board, Talisman is officially expanding its services to include right-of-way consulting to support clients in easement and fee acquisition, permitting, corridor analysis and preservation, title research and due diligence, utility coordination, and encroachment agreements.



David Marshall



Craig McKennon



Kathryn Thomas



Jenna Ely



Irena Dimitrova



Ben Butler



Sean Lange



Charity Wardle



Clarissa Floyd



Jeffery Davis



Veronica Karr



Mitch Karr

Salt Lake-headquartered **FFKR Architects** announced the following promotions to Senior Associate and Associate. They join FFKR's current Principals, Senior Associates, and Associates who embody the firm's dedication to innovative, high-quality, environmentally responsible architecture.

Senior Associate:
Kathryn Thomas, NCIDQ, IIDA – Interior Designer

Associates:
Jenna Ely, AIA, PLA, NCARB – Architect and Landscape Architect
Irena Dimitrova, AIA, NCARB – Architect

Ben Butler, AIA, NCARB – Architect
Sean Lange, RA, NCARB – Architect
Charity Wardle, NCIDQ – Interior Designer
Clarissa Floyd, NCIDQ – Interior Designer

Minneapolis-based **MSR Design** announced the elevation of multiple team members in its Utah office. The promotions reflect a recent firm-wide restructuring that redefines Principal as a project-centered role, creating clear pathways for talented individuals to lead projects at the highest level.

Jeffery Davis, who has led the Utah office since it opened in 2022, was recently

named a firm Principal. Davis has been involved in the planning and design of more than 5 million SF of public buildings and more than 6 million SF of higher education facilities, including libraries, cultural arts centers, and housing throughout his career.

Since joining MSR Design, Jeff has positively shaped our practice through his leadership," said MSR Design Partner Matthew Krontorad. "Jeff connects with people genuinely and instills confidence through thought leadership and passion for our work. As Principal, Jeff will undoubtedly draw out the best in our staff and clients, while providing inspiration through his work."

Veronica Karr earned the title of Senior Associate. As the firm's Interior Design Discipline Lead and a nearly 12-year firm veteran, Veronica works in a broad spectrum of scales, ranging from furniture and graphics to architectural and interior design. She is constantly toggling between the big picture concept and the fine details that, together, make a project remarkable.

Mitch Karr earned the title of Senior Associate. As a Project Architect with over 12 years at the firm, Mitch has worked on a variety of project types and scales. He appreciates that all projects are unique, with varied and numerous constraints and opportunities to surprise, challenge, and ultimately delight us in ways that fulfill our more profound human needs. ■

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2026 Economic Outlook



Photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photography

Economists and industry leaders remain optimistic about the commercial design and construction market in the Beehive State, with moderate 1.5% growth expected.

By Bradley Fullmer

Dejan Eskic was blunt in his assessment of Utah's 2026 economic outlook during a January 13 presentation to the American Concrete Institute (ACI), Intermountain Chapter, remarking in his opening statement, "I feel like we're living in a season of the [television] show '24', where every episode, you're holding your breath."

Eskic, Sr. Research Fellow at the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah, was talking about geopolitics, specifically referencing the economic impact of the Trump Administration's global tariffs after a year, and how economic outlooks are not so easy to predict when

dealing with the potential impact of national and international factors.

"Part of talking about economics, it can get political," he continued. "I try not to be political about it, but it's hard to unravel the two, right? Whatever [information] President Trump releases on whatever media platform has influence on the market. Tariffs really brought a lot of uncertainty and made the market very skittish."

Eskic said tariffs are his "least favorite subject, because we haven't had to talk about it for 100 years, and all of a sudden it's gone haywire—there's a lot of uncertainty with tariffs." He added that the Gardner

Policy Institute will release a white paper detailing tariff impacts later this year.

Interest Rate Cuts Not Anticipated in 2026

The Fed did not cut interest rates at its first meeting of the year on January 28, and Chair Jerome Powell believes keeping the current rate of 3.5% to 3.75% is prudent, with stabilizing unemployment and inflation rates signaling a steady economic year.

"Employment rates have stabilized to the point where they're not forecasting a rate cut. I think they're anticipating steady rates between 3.5% and 3.75%," said Ryan Starks, Executive Director of the Economic

Development Corporation of Utah. "Just having that predictability is the most important thing."

Home mortgage rates took a sharp dip in January, Eskic reported, from 6.8% to 6%, which is something "you pay attention to" considering it happened in just a few days. Steady rates mean developers know exactly what to expect and can determine whether or not to pull the plug on projects that have been paused while more favorable rates are seen.

Utah Expected to Have Moderate Economic Growth

Eskic cited the Gardner Institute's 2026 Economic Report to the Governor when announcing a slew of favorable projected stats that underscore moderate 1.5%

- **Steady job growth** of 1.5%, including a robust 3.2% construction job growth (143,000 jobs);
- **Rising average wages** of 3%-4%, with some construction trades expected to eclipse 5% wage growth;
- **Continued population growth**, albeit at a slower 1.3% clip overall; Utah County led the way with 2.1% growth;
- **Low state unemployment rate** of 3.3% in 2025, significantly better than the national average of 4.4%.

While these numbers are down from peak totals within the past decade, they still portend a growing economy, with construction playing a vital role in the state's overall economic health.

AGC Optimistic for Another Solid Year

The Associated General Contractors of Utah (AGC of Utah) remains a steady voice for construction in the Beehive State, and its members "are cautiously optimistic about 2026, with the strongest confidence in infrastructure, power, and data-driven projects," said Joey Gilbert, AGC of Utah President/CEO, citing his association's record-level 700+ members statewide as an indicator of the health of the industry.

"Utah's biggest structural advantage is that it's still a growth state with strong population gains and job growth creation with durable demand for housing, commercial space, and public infrastructure," added Robert Spendlove, Chief Economist for Zions Bank. "We also benefit from a relatively healthy labor market and strong household fundamentals. Utah's unemployment rate (hovering around 3%) remains lower than the national average (4.4%), and wage growth has been running above the U.S."

That's not to say everything is peaches and cream, as job growth "has cooled compared to the post-pandemic surge," said Ken Simonson, AGC of America Chief Economist. "Contractors are still dealing with labor pressures, wages are expected to keep rising 4%-5%, and policy actions affecting labor availability could make staffing harder in 2026. At the same time,

the national data show job openings have fallen, which is consistent with a market that's still tight in key trades, but less overheated than a year or two ago."

Gilbert agreed that construction labor in Utah has steadied a bit, saying "the labor market is still tight but stabilizing, with steady wage growth and increased focus on workforce development and retention."

There are other tailwinds in Utah's favor as 2026 begins. Spendlove said, "Utah's underlying economic fundamentals remain strong: population growth (about 1.5%) and employment growth (north of 2.0%) are still outpacing the U.S., which supports a steady pipeline of construction demand."

Simonson agreed that Utah remains a hot business market—yet again—to have another solid year. "Utah remains resilient. The opportunity set in 2026 looks best where demand is most durable—data centers, power, and infrastructure. Utah is well-positioned to compete [nationally] in those areas. Even with uncertainty, contractors are planning, not freezing. The main watchouts are financing conditions and cost volatility, but there's still meaningful work in the queue."

Gilbert added, "Utah's construction industry is well-positioned in 2026 due to strong economic fundamentals and sustained demand in key sectors."

Demand Brisk for Data Centers, Infrastructure, Energy, Other Markets

Contractors and designers recognize the rapidly rising demand for data centers, and therefore, the energy to drive power-thirsty—not to mention water-thirsty—projects, and are positioning themselves accordingly.

Utah Governor Spencer Cox has "Operation Gigawatt" rolling, a 10-year initiative started in 2024 to develop new energy production across multiple power sources.

"It's absolutely essential that we get in front of energy," said Starks. "We're seeing that from a population growth standpoint, but also from a commercial growth standpoint. With more development taking place, somebody's got to take the lead, and>>

we feel like Utah is well-positioned to be that leader. The Governor wants to double energy production as part of the ‘Operation Gigawatt’ initiative. Our approach to energy is an ‘all-of-the-above’ approach—natural gas, solar, nuclear, geothermal.”

Gilbert said Utah’s legislative leaders are keen to see Governor Cox’s energy ideas come to fruition.

“Their priorities are energy production and reliability,” said Gilbert. “Senator [Stuart] Adams believes the state that controls AI will control the world. AI demands power and a lot of it. [State legislators are] dedicated to making sure Utah has infrastructure and power resources. We’re looking at energy resources, from nuclear to solar and everything in between.”

Potential Achilles Heel: No Relief in Housing Costs

One major headwind threatens all the potential economic positives and happy news on the horizon for 2026 and beyond: truly affordable housing. The Gardner Institute’s report ranked the Beehive State as the ninth-most expensive in the U.S. based on 2024 median prices at nearly \$550,000. Figures for 2025 place Utah amongst the 10 least affordable states to buy a home, with Salt Lake and Washington Counties among the most expensive in the state per median price.

“If you’re in the buying market right now as a first-time home buyer, your choices are very limited,” said Eskic. “If you look at apartment rents, they’ve gone down [or] they’re relatively flat because we’re getting

more supply. We’re seeing the supply and demand balance happening in real time.”

While some estimates place Utah’s housing shortage at 28,000 to 40,000 units, a recent study funded by the Utah Legislature found that more than 840,000 new homes will need to be built over the next 30 years to meet expected demand.

Governor Cox also set a goal of at least 35,000 new “starter homes” be built by January 2029, when his time as Utah’s top politician runs out.

Utah Remains Insulated from National Trends

Eskic closed by saying that Utah continues to be an outlier compared to other states, in that no matter what is happening on a national level, the state keeps humming along, as if impervious to outside economic headwinds. Part of that is based on a thriving construction market, and several huge, high-profile projects that offer a true trickle-down effect on the overall building market.

“When you take into account projects [like the Salt Lake Airport Redevelopment], what’s happening downtown, everything at [The Point], the Texas Instruments expansion [...], then the [2034] Olympics, right? I feel like we have this bubble of economic growth happening [...] that no matter what happens nationally, we have so much demand and so much momentum going forward into the next decade,” said Eskic. “There might be some choppy waters ahead, but you know, my advice is to just be prepared for anything and take advantage of it.” ■



Utah’s 2026 economic outlook is positive in part from transformational developments happening across the state, like the multi-billion-dollar Texas Instruments fabrication plant in Lehi (pictured), The Pointe’s mixed-use development at Point of the Mountain (bottom left), and The New SLC Airport Redevelopment Program (bottom right), which is set to complete its fourth and final phase later this year. (photos courtesy Richard Green, Don Green Photography)



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SKY HIGH-END CLUB

Opulent, classy, and spacious, the dazzling new 34,000-SF Delta Sky Club—Concourse B offers a world-class hospitality experience, including a first-ever Digital Immersion Room.

By B.H. Wright

When it comes to classy sophistication, the sparkling new Delta Sky Club—Concourse B at Salt Lake City International Airport sets an incredibly high bar in both form and function.

The opulent 34,000-SF club—Delta's second at The New SLC—offers members myriad ways to relax and decompress from the rigors of travel, highlighted by the truly unique Digital Immersion Room.

Salt Lake-based HOK worked with Zenappic of Novato, Calif., on the

impressive display, which was designed with neuroinclusive principles in mind. The innovative space surrounds guests with seven expansive screens featuring aerial views of Utah's iconic landscapes, including the state's five national parks and cityscapes of downtown Salt Lake architecture. Synchronized natural soundscapes enhance the visuals, creating a calming, immersive, and four-dimensional experience. Velvet drapery, darker tones, and curved acoustic baffles further support the sensory environment. >>

The new Delta Sky Club—Concourse B in the Salt Lake International Airport is a dazzling new addition to Delta's portfolio of scintillating clubs worldwide. At 34,000 SF, it is Delta's second-largest club in the U.S., and features a breathtaking array of diverse spaces. (all photos by Jason Dewey courtesy Delta Air Lines except where indicated)

As the only club in Delta’s network to offer this experience, Salt Lake City sets a new benchmark for innovation and traveler comfort.

“We wanted it to feel like a cocoon, a space you can get away from the hustle and bustle, even from what’s going on within the club,” said Sarah Oppenhuizen, Director of Interiors at HOK. The seven screens are tied into the speaker system, “so you’re hearing birds chirping, or a plane flying by, or a storm rolling in. Zenapptic did a fabulous job of taking these scenes, images taken all across Utah, and splitting them into layers [...] that can move in a way that makes it feel like you are actually viewing that scene.”

The material palette and lighting selections also reflect and amplify Utah’s natural beauty. From warm tones to reflective surfaces, every detail connects travelers to the spirit of the state.

The club itself is a diverse wonder of breathtaking spaces created from a highly curated and layered material palette. Each space was meticulously crafted into “neighborhoods” appealing to myriad client tastes and preferences.

There are eight specific ceiling systems, eight custom terrazzo blends, a dozen tile products, and dynamic specialty lighting—creating a refined ambience inspired by Utah’s diverse landscapes while maintaining the elevated experience

synonymous with Delta’s iconic brand.

The distinct neighborhoods highlight the club’s supreme functionality supporting a robust 600-seat capacity—it’s Delta’s second-largest club after La Guardia in New York City—while maintaining comfort, intuitive circulation, and a soothing acoustical environment.

“That sense of arrival, comfort and quiet luxury is fundamental to how we think about the Delta Sky Club experience and this project truly delivers on that vision.”

— **Mishael Thompson**

Larger-scale stone flooring with red accents evokes a natural hiking path while providing durability and ease of movement for guests with rolling luggage. Sound-absorbing properties are integrated into ceilings and select walls throughout the space to maintain a serene guest experience.

“Creating distinct neighborhoods gave us the flexibility to increase seating capacity without sacrificing comfort,” said Mishael Thompson, Design Lead at Delta

Air Lines. “Guests can easily find a space that fits how they want to travel—whether that’s social, private, or somewhere in between.”

“The goal was to bring a true sense of place into the space without overwhelming the guest,” added Oppenhuizen. “By layering materials, color, and technology, we were able to reference Utah’s landscape in a subtle way while maintaining the timeless, hospitality-driven feel of a Delta Sky Club.”

Design elements on Level 2, which serves as the entry experience, incorporate cooler whites and blues inspired by a Park City winter, while Level 3 transitions to warmer reds and bronze tones that reference Utah’s caves and caverns. A signature seating area at the top of the escalators—featuring layered blue furnishings and a rippled metal ceiling—draws inspiration from the Great Salt Lake.

An expansive, curving bar is an eye-catcher—a unique reflective ceiling above with twinkling lights is a highlight that recalls the state’s copper mines. Blue-veined marble countertops in the space reflect crystal-like light fixtures reminiscent of stalactites, adding a sense of natural wonder.

Emphasis on High-Quality Finishes, Resort-like Feel

Maintaining the Delta brand is always a top priority for designers, and while explicitly branded elements in Delta Sky Clubs are minimal—primarily limited to the check-in area and select touchpoints—the broader brand strategy centers on elevating the airport experience through high-quality design, materials, and comfort. Branding is subtly expressed through a hospitality-driven environment that conveys both luxury and durability.

“We want all our guests to feel like they’ve just stepped into a high-end hotel lobby—not an airport,” said Thompson. “That sense of arrival, comfort, and quiet luxury is fundamental to how we think about the Delta Sky Club experience, and this project truly delivers on that vision.”

While program standards remain consistent across all Delta Sky Clubs to ensure familiarity, hub locations such as



The entry to the club invokes a cool feeling with arctic blue design elements and copious daylighting. (photo by Eric Laignel courtesy HOK)

Salt Lake City provide opportunities to further elevate the experience through regionally inspired materials and design cues. This balance of consistency and localization reinforces Delta’s brand

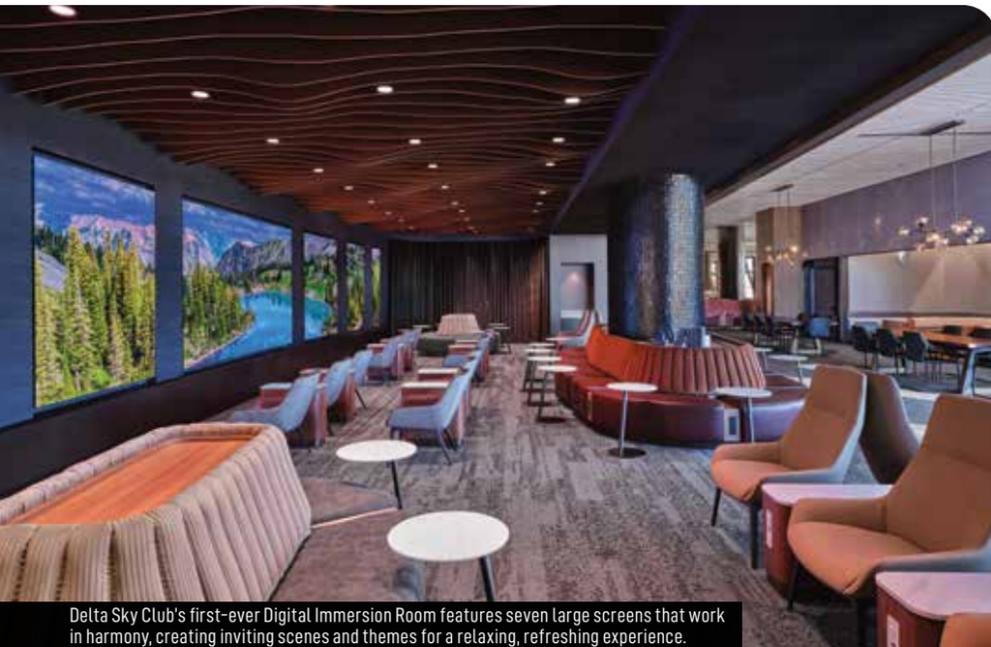
promise while allowing each club to feel distinctive and connected to its location.

The new club is larger than its sister Delta Sky Club in Concourse A—that one checks in at 29,000 SF. The expanded

footprint provided opportunities to further elevate the experience through additional amenities, greater spatial variety, and a stronger emphasis on regional design elements while still maintaining consistency with Delta’s established Sky Club standards.

Attention to detail is a Delta hallmark, added Thompson, with high-quality finishes essential to the project’s overall aesthetic. Achieving this level of quality required extensive coordination, including detailed submittal reviews to ensure each material and design element met Delta’s performance and durability standards. Attention to craftsmanship played a critical role in delivering a club that aligns with Delta’s elevated brand experience.

“Our guests notice the details,” Thompson emphasized. “From the durability of finishes to how materials feel and perform over time, quality was non-negotiable on this project.” >>



Delta Sky Club’s first-ever Digital Immersion Room features seven large screens that work in harmony, creating inviting scenes and themes for a relaxing, refreshing experience.

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The club exudes a calm, sophisticated ambience, while offering members high-end drinks, cocktails, and food. The main bar is a fantastic space with unlimited fascinating design elements, illustrating the high collaboration between owner and designer.

Collaboration, Communication Critical During Design Process

Oppenhuizen said the team visited a handful of Delta Sky Clubs, including Los Angeles (LAX), Phoenix (PHX), and Kansas City (MCI), to get a sense of the high-quality, high-end elements found in these exquisite clubs.

During design, with Concourse B under construction as part of the multi-phase \$5.1 billion Salt Lake City Airport Redevelopment Program (SLC ARP), Delta requested that Level 3—the Sky Club level—be expanded from 19,000 SF to nearly 30,000 SF. While the SLC ARP team was able to accommodate the expansion, the request resulted in an overlap between base building construction and interior design development.

To maintain the schedule, the design team issued early coordination packages that allowed the base building contractor to complete essential infrastructure—including kitchen, restroom, bar and seat power systems—before the Sky Club construction team mobilized. This approach required close collaboration and rapid decision-making across all project partners.

“Designing while the base building was still under construction required a high level of trust and fast decision-making,” said Elizabeth Paredes, Technical Coordinator for HOK. “The early coordination packages were critical to keeping the project on schedule and ensuring nothing was compromised in the final design.”

From an interior design perspective, Delta’s core design principles of socialize, respite, focus, discover, relax, and journey are embedded in the club’s design and final construction. Guests can socialize at the bar, find respite in the immersion room, focus in one of the many phone booths, discover Utah’s beauty in the incredible views, relax by the fireplace, and take a journey through the state’s landscapes via the hiking path. >>

Delta Sky Club—Concourse B

Familiarity with GC Leads to Smooth Construction Process

The project was delivered by Atlanta-based Holder Construction via CMAR, creating a collaborative environment among the contractor, subcontractors, owner, and design team. This delivery approach was essential in resolving complex details and executing the high level of customization required for the space, where nearly every element was thoughtfully curated for this specific club and location.

“The CMAR delivery method created a true team environment,” said Kenneth Dodson, General Manager of Corporate Real Estate at Delta Air Lines. “With so many custom elements, having everyone at the table early made a significant difference in solving challenges efficiently.”

From a tenant improvement standpoint, the process was especially smooth because the Holder-Big-D (HDJV) joint venture—the general contractor for SLC ARP—had completed core and shell work. That continuity meant the Holder team was familiar with the existing infrastructure, minimizing impacts to active concourse operations and allowing a strong focus on premium finishes and specialty detailing.

In addition, key Salt Lake-based subcontractors Archer Mechanical and

Cache Valley Electric had experience working on the massive airport redevelopment and were proficient with the details of the mechanical and electrical systems, which Oppenhuizen said was a “huge advantage” that aided the construction schedule.

Due to the active airport environment, material deliveries were restricted to nighttime hours and required close coordination with Delta’s operations team. Large east-facing windows were temporarily removed to install a roll-up door and ramp for material access. These were removed approximately two months prior to TCO to complete interior finishes.

Ultimately, Delta Sky Club—Concourse B stands as one of the finest clubs in all of Salt Lake, not just at the airport.

“In a portfolio as broad as HOK’s, this project is certainly meaningful,” added Oppenhuizen. “The scale and the introduction of Delta’s first Digital Immersion Room make it a special addition, but what really stands out is the collaboration behind it. It’s a project we’re proud of because it reflects what can happen when people come together to do something thoughtfully and well.” ■

—Anna-Katherine Daley from Delta contributed substantially to this article.

Delta Sky Club—SLC Concourse B

Location: Salt Lake City International Airport—Concourse B

Cost: \$45,900,000

Delivery Method: Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR)

Stories/Levels: 2

Square Footage: 34,000 SF

Owner: Delta Air Lines

Owner’s Rep: Corporate Real Estate (Kenneth Dodson); Delta Sky Club (Mishael Thompson)

Design Team

Architect: HOK

Electrical & Mechanical Engineer: HOK

Structural Engineer: HOK

Interior Design: HOK

Construction Team

General Contractor: Holder Construction Group

Interior Concrete: Suntec Concrete

Plumbing: Archer Mechanical

HVAC: Archer Mechanical, RM Chris Sheet Metal (subtier ductwork; sheet metal)

Electrical: Cache Valley Electric

Drywall & Painting: DAW Construction Group

Wall Coverings: Quirk

Tile/Stone: Wall 2 Wall Commercial Flooring, MLG Flooring (subtier tile)

Millwork: ISEC

Flooring: FW Specialties (terrazzo), Wall 2 Wall Commercial Flooring (carpet/resilient)

Roofing: Flynn Companies (patching)

Glazing/Curtain Wall: Mollerup Glass (interior), Steel Encounters (exterior/curtain wall)

Misc. Steel: Intermark Steel

Food Service: Johnson-Lancaster & Associates

Ceilings: Golder

Fire Protection/Sprinkler: Fire Engineering Company

Custom Fireplace: Goodrich Chimney Services

Doors/Frames/Hardware: Unified Door & Hardware Group, Jensen’s Cabinets (custom restroom DFH)

Signage: YESCO



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New Trajectory for New Star

From a firm of union carpenter self-performers in 1986, Jeff Pettit and his team at New Star General Contractors look to summit new peaks as they continue building out the Wasatch Back and beyond.

By Taylor Larsen

Carpenters Union Local #184, ready to build.

Pettit came aboard New Star in 1989, joining his father and uncle at the firm, two journeymen union carpenters, while he apprenticed as the company grew.

Early Years; Midlife Struggles

Pettit praised the foundation established by Williams and Love in New Star's first decade, recalling how both owners worked as estimators and project managers as they sought to win work, while Treasa Love and Patti Williams, Love and Williams' respective wives, ran accounting, billing, and payroll.

The firm was at the cusp of taking off when Williams passed in 1997, but Love and the few dozen members of the New Star

to the community," said Pettit of the relationship between New Star and Peace House that has burned brightly ever since. Love joined the organization's board of directors, and New Star built Peace House's 40,000-SF expansion over 20 years later—a massive upgrade that delivered eight units of emergency shelter and 12 units of transitional housing for mothers and children. The project, a monumental community victory, eventually earned *UC+D's* "Publisher's Pick" award in 2019.

Company culture in those early years benefitted from the "New Star Band", a six-member ensemble of New Star employees. Love, his office wall lined with a notable guitar collection, led the charge.

As the Great Recession hit in 2007 and dragged on into the next decade, Pettit grimaced at how New Star laid off many employees as he, Love, and the remaining executives took massive pay cuts, following through on Love's advice: "Keep money in the company, because there will be lean times."

Building on Hospitality Prowess

New Star resumed its successful trajectory in 2012, leaning into Utah's stalwart resort and hospitality market.

"Hospitality has been something that we've always been involved in," said Pettit. The challenging nature of delivering mountain-town developments has been one that New Star has welcomed and



Midlife crisis? Try mid-life calm for New Star General Contractors as the Salt Lake-based construction firm celebrates 40 years of building great projects.

As President Jeff Pettit sits in the firm's conference room on the second story of the New Star office (self-performed in 1996), he reminisces on his 37 years there, as well as plenty of lore established when the firm emerged.

In 1986, carpenters Dave Love and Steve Williams were building a home for their boss's lawyer in Salt Lake City's Federal Heights. Their boss, Ranch Kimball, was the owner of Cannon Construction, and announced he would be closing shop later that year.

Love and Williams vowed to continue the good work, but under a new venture—New Star General Contractors. Based in Bountiful, New Star performed any

small project or remodel they could, even venturing east to remodel an Episcopal church in Vernal. The two owners ran New Star from a "carpenter's perspective", Pettit said with a smile, "A good, honest trade."

As employees gained a deep understanding of fieldwork and constructability, New Star self-performed much of the concrete, framing, and interior and exterior finishes, buoyed by a large pool of high-level union carpenters from Utah

team pressed on, working for Deer Valley's former parent company, Royal Street, on projects like Royal Plaza and Goldener Hirsch Phase 1.

"Those projects helped put New Star on the map," Pettit said.

Another foundational project was Peace House, a four-bedroom domestic violence shelter for women and children built in 1995.

"It was Dave's way of giving back

"Dave was a great musician and a great guitarist," said Pettit of the culture- and relationship-building efforts of the New Star Band. "Anyone who knew New Star knew of the band."

But it wasn't all roses, as New Star's union roots counted for little as the firm and many other general contractors battled trade unions in the early 2000s. Pettit recalled the picket lines that formed around their Salt Lake City office and their job sites.

wanted since 1986. The secret to success, he continued, "whether it's trade coordination, deliveries, or scheduling—you really gotta be on it."

The carpenter's mindset of high-end finishes and attention to detail has kept their clients delighted, especially on the Snow Park Lodge Expansion, Silver Lake Lodge, Black Diamond Lodge, The Inn At Silverlake, and others in Deer Valley. Pettit said the resort has been great to work with >>

throughout New Star's 40 year history, especially with the opportunity to complete Phase 2 of the Stein Erickson Lodge—a project that the original founders of New Star, Williams and Love, worked on while at Cannon Construction in the early 1980s.

Pettit noted that his team won a project for the Deer Valley East Village developer, Extell, adapting to the massive learning curve required for multifamily sequencing to deliver four buildings totaling 400,000 SF and 402 units—The Residences at Pioche Village.

Further into the city, they completed



Glenwild Residence



Glenwild Residence



Sage Creek Moab

Park City Resort Legacy Lodge and other developments, “and all up and down Park City Main Street,” with projects like 205, 632, and 692 Main Street, Parkwood Place, 820 Park Avenue, and Caledonian Town Lift.

New Star has also completed many golf clubhouses, cabins, and other buildings in luxury mountain developments like Tuhaye, Glenwild, Victory Ranch, and Skyridge.

Currently, the firm is working on many more projects in Deer Valley. New Star just installed a Sprung Structure—the massive, tension fabric structures used for indoor tennis and other sports—as Deer Valley Resort's temporary skier services facility in the rapidly transforming East Village. This spring, the team will also start on 32 ski-in/ski-out condos, The Havens at Deer Crest, which Pettit said are a major draw in luxury developments. Ski Rail, a workforce-housing project for Alterra Mountain Group, is set to start in July.

Whether it is Peace House, Deer Valley, Tuhaye, Empire Pass, or the many other mountain resort projects New Star has completed, Pettit said, “I'm excited that we've cultivated these relationships and that they are still bringing us more work today.”

Pettit sees Utah in good shape as the state prepares to receive visitors and athletes for the 2034 Winter Olympics, saying, “The economy and the state are doing well, and the Olympics are exciting for our line of work.”

New Future for New Star

Pettit has been the full owner of New Star since 2024, purchasing Love's remaining shares after acquiring 49% of the company in 2015. Sadly, Love passed away in July of 2025, but Pettit reflected fondly on his

colleague and mentor Tom Case, Managing Principal at TCM Services, along with the rest of the executive team—Alicia VanHolten (CFO), Taylor Burton (Director of Project Development), and John Plyer (Director of Operations)—identified what is important to the firm and where New Star can improve to meet their growth goals. Once the new strategy was implemented, the team brought Kara Southwick aboard as Business Development Director to help New Star soar.

“We're not looking for growth to become just a bigger company,” said Pettit. Instead,

“The last 10 years have been learning to run a business, and I love learning.”

— Jeff Pettit

30-plus years working with the New Star founder.

“Dave was always the brightest star in the room!” Pettit recalled. “37 years ago, he gave me, a carpenter at the time, the opportunity to move into the office where he had a profound impact on my personal life and career.”

Pettit, 62, gestured around the conference room, reflecting on all the work done across their domain in the Wasatch Back, and on a promising future, as he envisioned a succession plan for New Star and its 30 current employees: “This is the retirement plan.”

New Star is looking to increase its team and revenue by 20% each of the next five years, aiming to double both. It's ambitious, Pettit said, “But I like to reach.”

Part of that growth will come from working within the framework and strategic plan developed last year. Longtime

New Star is looking at growth as a chance to diversify their markets, build on old relationships and create new ones, and continue finding “good projects with good value”.

He hopes that, since the first generation of the company has retired, New Star can continue getting team members in the field as much as possible, “and promoting those in the field because they understand what to build. [...] There should always be someone in management who knows how to build.”

“We started as carpenters and builders,” said Pettit, whose passion and respect for those in the field who build was evident in every word. “My first 25 years were about learning the job” as a carpenter, project engineer, project manager, and estimator. He continued, “The last 10 years have been learning to run a business,” he said. “And I love learning.”

Pettit was mentored and raised in the industry as a tradesman and businessman, and hopes to continue that ethos. With a new strategy in place, New Star General Contractors continues to shine, building on a legacy established across the Wasatch Back and beyond. ■

New Star General Contractors Top Projects

Project	Location	Completion Date
Peace House	Park City	1995; 2019
Royal Plaza	Park City	1997
Goldener Hirsch Phase 1	Park City	1997
Glenwild Clubhouse	Park City	2001
The Miners Club	Park City	2003
Sage Creek Resort	Moab	2018
The Lift Park City	Park City	2019
Victory Ranch Clubhouse	Park City	2023
The Residences at Pioche Village	Park City	2023
The Izzy	SLC	2024



The Izzy



The Lift Park City



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Seasoned

to Perfection in Providence

The new corporate headquarters for the outdoor cooking brand stays local to its Cache Valley roots while the building's modern design soars above its "backyard" location in Providence.

By Taylor Larsen



The new Weber Blackstone headquarters project involved significant civil work in dewatering and wetland preservation so close to Big Ballard Springs and Blacksmith Fork River. Once completed, the finished build's Prodemá wood paneling exterior gives the building take-off. (all photos courtesy R&O Construction except where indicated)



Backyards are for grillin' and chillin', and nobody understands it better than Weber Blackstone, the company formed from a merger between the iconic Weber barbecue brand headquartered outside of Chicago, with the up-and-coming—and Cache Valley-based—Blackstone Products. When the opportunity came to build out a new corporate headquarters, it had to be local. So why not house it in Blackstone's own backyard in Providence?

Providence in Location

Long before Weber and Blackstone completed their merger in 2025, Joe Jacoby detailed how the design ethos for the new office took shape. Providence isn't just a city in Cache Valley; it's the timely preparation for future eventualities.

"Since the Blackstone griddle was making huge strides in the industry of outdoor cooking and backyard entertaining, the concept for the building and site design took inspiration from the idea of the backyard," said Jacoby, President and Director of Design of Salt Lake-based Jacoby Architects.

"The building form took on the shape of wings, delicately landing on this beautiful site," Jacoby said, mentioning the symbolism of the Blackstone team using those wings to take off as successful product designers. "The footprint of the building was oriented such that it opened its arms to the backyard concept—looking out to the river and springs in the backdrop."

"The concept for the building and site design took inspiration from the idea of the backyard."

— Joe Jacoby

Sited near the Blacksmith Fork River and Big Ballard Springs, the rural area surrounding the newly built headquarters is dreamy in its water features and foliage. Water may be beautiful, but it is rarely welcome in construction. For Will Haymond, Project Director for R&O Construction at the firm's Ogden office, the first of multiple challenges involved the nearby

river and springs, as well as the high water table. A significant portion of the site was considered wetlands, meaning Haymond and R&O Construction Superintendents Russ Maughan and Willie Stewart would work hand in hand with building trade partners and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for a successful project that preserved the surrounding ecology.

"We had to put mitigating barriers in place through the site, and spent four months dewatering the site to prepare it for utilities," said Haymond, crediting work from Logan-based LeGrand Johnson Construction for their civil and utilities scopes that had the hometown firm on site for nearly 18 months. Some involved collaborating with the USACE on permits and inspections for the eventual 1,000-foot-plus water and sewer runs that traversed the site.

While the working relationship with the USACE improved over time, the area's rustic charm kept spirits high throughout construction.

"We loved working there," Haymond said of efforts with city officials and on-site.

"We had the chance to spread out a little bit on site, and it helped us attack that building, especially tackling all the structural concrete in the dead of winter." Trade partner Frontline Concrete was able to use the expansive pastoral site to cast their 65 board-formed sandwich panels for nearly all of the structure's concrete walls.

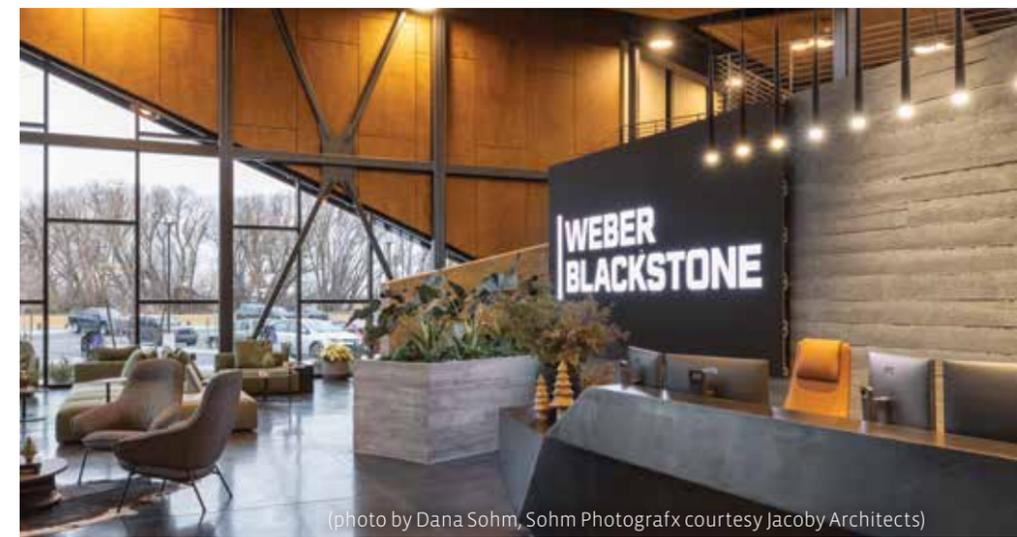
Prodemá Prominence

Jacoby explained how the building's timeless feel comes through in simple materials—steel, concrete, glass, and an outer superstructure clad with a geometric formed Prodemá rain screen.

Wait. What was that last one?

Pronounced Pro-DEE-muh, Prodemá is a manufactured wood material from Spain that offers unparalleled resistance to the elements as well as a warm and timeless architectural feature for the Weber Blackstone Global Headquarters.

Construction is best within a relationship of trust and understanding—materials included. R&O Construction had no prior familiarity with Prodemá, which was further complicated by the product's



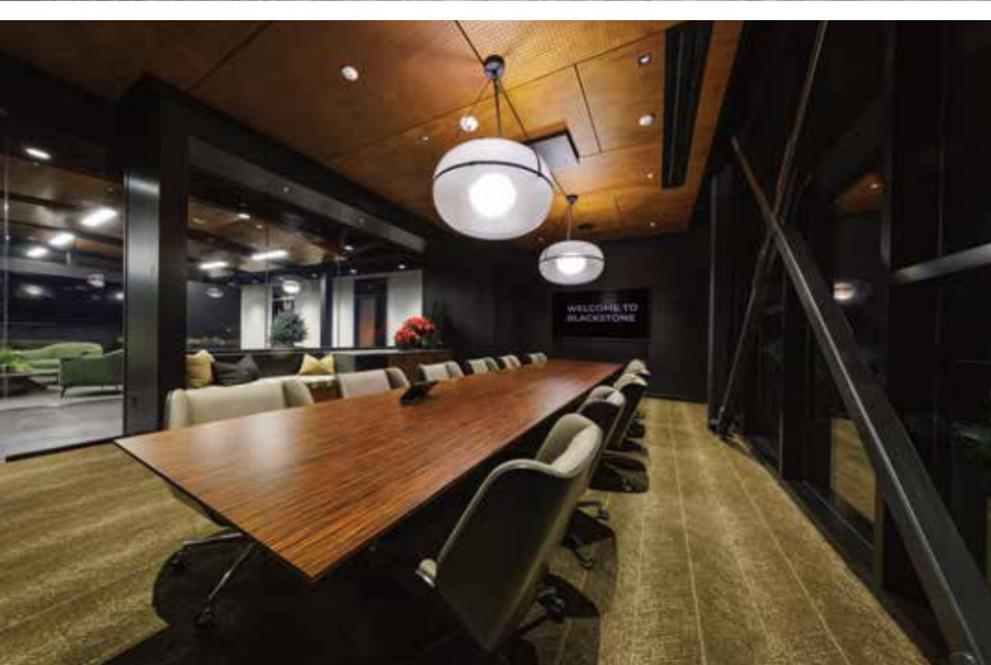
(photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Fotografx courtesy Jacoby Architects)

nine-month lead time, followed by an additional month of acclimation before installation.

"Jacoby felt very strongly about the product, even though we had our doubts," Haymond said. The builders put their faith in the Jacoby Architects team, including Project Manager Kraig Wilkes, and a stellar trio of building envelope and steel trade partners who brilliantly combined to make the design pop.

The Hazel Matte-colored rain screen architectural feature is supported by 277 uniquely shaped and sized vertical trusses mounted to the board-formed concrete tilt-up walls. Haymond detailed how HA Fabricators delivered the highest level of precision on their steel fabrication scope, saying, "I can't think of a single piece of incorrect steel delivered." Steel Krest matched the precision in placing each part, where Haymond credited the Farr >>





West-based firm for their deft execution in creating a superstructure that holds the panels away from the main structure with concealed fasteners on a rail system. These efforts set the table for Flynn Companies to install the rectangular panels for a fantastically unique 3D design, as Jacoby described, in which the building's outer skin appears to be taking flight.

Board-formed concrete background cladding was created with various-sized cedar planks to continue the outdoor theme. Black glazing frames fade into the shadows of the building's main forms, finding an enviable balance of striking and complementary.

"When you approach the building from far away," said Jacoby, "it feels like it enhances the surrounding natural setting—like it belongs. [...] Even though the background structure is board-formed concrete, the geometrically folded wings made of Prodema paneling make the building feel lightweight, as if it landed gently on the site."

Interiors Come Alive

The backyard concept continues inside, "blurring the boundary where indoor ends and outdoor begins," Jacoby said, detailing how the collaboration with Michelle Dunker Design perfectly blended natural and industrial elements.

The lobby is the most breathtaking example. Trees and plants rise from raw board-formed concrete planter boxes. Daylight from the curtain wall glazing and wood paneling on the walls and ceilings combine with cool industrial layers—blackened steel, charcoal-colored polished concrete floors—for the perfect balance.

Massing and forms continue the theme. The concrete collaboration stairs are topographical, with a layer of Douglas Fir sitting atop like a mountain tree line. Four geometric "boulders" serve as small collaborative or breakout spaces for an employee or two. These inverted cubical boulders are scattered throughout the common area, where the two on the ground floor seem like massive rocks dropped from



Collaboration between Jacoby Architects and Michele Dunker Design helped interiors thread the needle between industrial and natural. Board-formed concrete planter boxes in the lobby hold trees and other greenery. The steel-framed "boulders" pictured in the center appear as if seemingly dropped in place, crashing through the dark, polished concrete floors. (photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photografx courtesy Jacoby Architects)

the sky, plunging into the lobby's dark, polished concrete floor.

Haymond described how boulders were constructed, noting that the shell was formed by aligning and assembling six-inch black antique tube steel frames. Frameless glazing encloses the room and provides a window inside the boulders, revealing interior tongue-and-groove wood. Alta Fire (fire protection), Cache Valley Electric (electrical), Carson Plumbing & Mechanical and Western Mechanical (HVAC) then routed their respective scopes under and into the boulders for full functionality.

Functional, Fantastic Office

From grilling and griddling through the years, Weber Blackstone certainly understands the truth that form needs function, and vice versa.

The new headquarters is a worthy example of the cause, supporting employees across a plethora of uniformly designed, job-specific spaces. The commercial kitchen adjacent to the ground-floor lobby and reception area offers employees discounted meals, where Chef John gives a tour of all their gadgets and prep areas that help feed up to 250 employees at the offices and the firm's nearby distribution facility. The new HQ includes a test kitchen, a showroom, and outdoor kitchens, too.

Across two stories, work areas are supported by conference rooms, break rooms, and breakout spaces that continue the building's warm yet industrial look and feel, where wood paneling, black metal features, and polished concrete reign. The structure even contains a first-floor indoor gymnasium with a basketball court, as well as a second-floor running track and fitness room.

"Working with owners and the design team, it was a fun project. We put together an A-Team of subcontractors. [...] it's what makes it fun to work through the challenges."

— Will Haymond

Ownership requested a 40-foot-long expansion across two levels mid-construction for the company's R&D teams. The change would allow Weber Blackstone to expand its operations to meet the internal growth during the construction schedule. Expansion added new features, new functionality, increased occupancy, and a way to diversify the firm's program spaces.

Jacoby said, "It was an on-the-fly decision mid-construction between the owner, contractor, subcontractors, and architect seamlessly put into motion without any negative impacts to the existing construction scope."

Weber Blackstone Continues to Fly

Inside or outside, what may have felt inevitable throughout the process—that Blackstone Products, eventually Weber Blackstone, would have the global headquarters of their dreams—only makes seeing the new space in person unforgettable.

As the merger between the two outdoor cooking standouts continues, the team on site, longtime Blackstone employees, said that this first build is part of a future campus for the growing company. Expect the outdoor cooking conglomerate to continue expanding the site with additional trails and backyard features, adding to the pathways adjacent to the river and the natural springs on site.

For now, many on the project team reminisce. Like Jacoby, who refocused the attention on the delicate balance struck in design: "It feels warm, cozy, and luxurious—while also feeling industrial and built for function."

Or Haymond, who said, "Working with owners and the design team, it was a >>>



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fun project. We put together an A-Team of subcontractors. [...] it's what makes it fun to work through the challenges," he continued.

"I can't think of a single company I wouldn't back."

"It's one of those projects that I'll never forget." ■

Weber Blackstone Global Headquarters

Location: 549 S. Highway 165, Providence, UT 84332

Square Feet: 86,000 SF

Levels/Stories: 2

Project Team

Owner: Weber Blackstone

Owner's Rep: Colby Gill

Design Team

Architect: Jacoby Architects

Structural Engineer: TBSE

Mechanical Engineer: WHW Engineering

Electrical Engineer: Envision Engineering

Civil Engineer: Civil Solutions Group

Landscape Design: Ag-Trac Enterprises

Food Service Design: Jedrzejewski Designs

Interior Design: Jacoby Architects, Michele Dunker Design

Lighting Design: Michele Dunker Design, Envision Engineering

Furniture: Michele Dunker Design, Interior Solutions

Construction Team

General Contractor: R&O Construction

Concrete: Frontline Concrete

Plumbing & HVAC: Carson Plumbing & Mechanical, Western Mechanical

Electrical: Cache Valley Electric

Drywall/Acoustics: K&K Drywall

Painting: Accent Painting & Specialty Coatings

Tile/Stone: Spectra Contract Flooring

Carpentry: RJP Construction

Millwork: Clients Design

Flooring: Wall 2 Wall Commercial Flooring, Stone Touch

Roofing: Redd Roofing

Glass/Curtain Wall: Flynn Companies

Waterproofing: Guaranteed Waterproofing & Construction

Steel Fabrication: HA Fabricators

Steel Erection: Steel Krest

Excavation: LeGrand Johnson Construction (Kilgore)

Landscaping: Waterscape Landscaping



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Altamont High School



Union High School



Richfield High School

ROOTS

RURAL

For 30 years, KMA Architects has delivered joy to rural and suburban K-12 clients by providing efficient, beautiful designs from the firm's relatable approach.

By Taylor Larsen

Little did the team at KMA Architects know how much a proposal for one high school would change their fortunes forever.

Duchesne School District released its RFP for a new Altamont High School in 2011. Wes Christensen, then Project Architect, felt like it was a winnable project. After all, KMA Architects had built a stellar reputation designing schools throughout Utah since the firm opened in 1996.

There was just one problem with this RFP: KMA didn't design new high schools.

While the firm focused primarily on elementary and junior high schools, Christensen and others on the KMA team were confident in their design proposal and threw their hat in the ring to win the job.

"I was certain our competition was going to present a two-story high school," said Christensen, recalling the various brainstorming sessions that hinged on how to best present their design for a durable and economical one-story school with easily accessible mechanical mezzanines over the corridors.

The district's response had the KMA team ecstatic: "We love it."

Winning the Altamont High job with a one-story design is one of many examples of KMA's emphasis on listening first, a legacy established long before the firm relocated its headquarters in 2020, and long before the team sat for this interview, overlooking Spanish Fork Main Street from their stylish second-story conference room.

Sometimes two stories are best, and KMA's history is among them.



Wes Christensen

Kevin Madsen

Starting Shop in Provo

It starts with Kevin Madsen initially pursuing engineering at the University of Utah, graduating in 1972, but with a passion for the entire industry. He earned his contractor license in 1974, but he made his mark in design.

"I was good at drawing and drafting," Madsen, now retired, said from the comfort of the drafting table of his Palmyra home.

Madsen even taught drafting and CAD at the former Utah Valley State College (now Utah Valley University) from 1990-1993, saying, "That's when I realized I wanted to run an architectural firm."

After Nebo and Sevier school districts personally requested Madsen's services, he founded Kevin Madsen & Associates Architects in January 1996, bringing Christensen and others to work on the firm's many projects. One of which began when Madsen bought a historic Victorian home at 195 East and 100 North in Provo and turned it into the KMA office in 1998.

"It was a work in progress all the way," laughed Madsen over the phone. That contractor license came in handy; Madsen salvaged high-quality carpet scraps from schools and brought them back to the office.>>



From the comfort of their self-designed office on Spanish Fork Main Street (above), KMA Architects works their design magic on projects across Utah.

Christensen, now KMA's Owner and Principal, remembered sanding beams, tearing out old carpet, and stapling in the new flooring in its place—he's got the scars to prove it.

Other famous memories the entire senior KMA team recalled involved creating original blueprints with ammonia and venturing up I-15 to the old Service Blue print shop in Salt Lake to print off dozens of client copies.

"We called it a 'Printing Event,'" Christensen said, recalling the various times that the team would yo-yo between Provo and Salt Lake to drop off their specifications and drawings, often at midnight or later, before returning the next morning to fill an entire truck bed with boxes of freshly printed copies.

Maintaining the Relationship Business

As architecture went digital, KMA welcomed new team-mates, such as Taggart Brower, Architectural BIM Technician, who joined the firm as a high school intern five years ago. Those pre-digital days are foreign to him, he said, "I feel like the work-life part is pretty balanced. But every year it seems that our work gets faster and faster."

As work accelerates, the relationship-based business of architecture grows more meaningful, especially for those with strong local project ties.

"Almost all my clients, facilities managers, and administrators went to the schools I'm working on," Brower said. Others agreed, noting that the pride KMA takes in design is mirrored by their clients. Scott Johnson, Project Architect who rejoined KMA after working for the Alpine School District for over a decade, just returned from a visit to Altamont High, 12 years since the project was completed.

"It looks like the day we turned it over," said Johnson. "They take pride in it and care for it. They have community events outside of school, and it's a central hub of that community."

Work Comes Home

KMA's "second story" began after design and programming on Altamont High, which Steven Carter, Sr. Project Manager with 26 years at the firm, called "The new KMA."

Their efforts opened a treasure chest of jobs—Uintah High in 2013, Richfield High in 2015, and Union High in Roosevelt in 2018—all firmly establishing KMA as one of the most sought-after designers at all levels of K-12.

While Madsen retired in 2017, KMA continued under Christensen at the helm and set out that same year to design replacements for the three veteran high schools—Spanish Fork, Payson, and Springville—in Nebo School District, KMA's "home" district.

"We went to these schools, our kids go to these schools, and we're right here to do it," said Christensen. He, Carter, Johnson, and fellow teammate Casey Carrick were all Spanish Fork "Dons" once upon a time.

The firm even moved its office within home district boundaries in 2020, the same Spanish Fork Main Street location that Christensen's father, Larry—"Chris" to his customers—used as his barbershop from 1972 to 2020.

Independent of the office locale, the KMA team has maintained a commitment to listening first and then maximizing their clients' budgets to design efficient, long-lasting community beacons.

"With rural districts, many times what we are designing is going to be the city's largest building," Christensen said. These structures are more than schools; they are community gathering places, shelters, and generational investments in these towns. Jacob Ricci, Project Manager & BIM Technician, spoke to how that responsibility informs their practice, detailing KMA's efforts to show the Piute School District teachers, administrators, and school board what the classrooms and auditoriums would look like in two upcoming schools—Circleville Elementary and Oscarson Elementary—the first schools built for Piute County's 1,400-plus residents in 30 years.

Ricci said their listen-first approach helps incorporate specific learning opportunities that meet community-specific needs, which help build local industries. Dialogue between client and architect helped incorporate extensive footings and foundations to support a crane for Emery High's welding and metal shop in Castle Dale, and helped expand

the performing arts space in Marysville's Oscarson Elementary to host the town's annual Christmas pageant. The team is currently designing durable concrete floors and an efficient drainage system for Bear River High's FFA program in Tremonton, where students can bring in livestock to show, clean, and learn veterinary care.

Design charrettes are part of the process to get KMA and their clients moving in the same direction, Christensen said, "But I feel like our rapport comes off better in just how we interact with them."

No snobby architect stereotype? "Not here," laughed Rob White, Sr. Project Manager and the longest-tenured of the KMA team since joining in June 1999. Instead, when they arrive at the job site in boots and flannel under their high-vis, they're relatable in a way appreciated by both contractors and clients.

The relatability comes through in design, too. White said the firm always aims to thread the needle in form and function with durable, easily maintainable schools that incorporate plenty of steel, stone, and masonry elements that students, staff, and residents can also enjoy for their architectural beauty.

"These school buildings have to stay up for a long time," said White. "These are going the distance. We're aiming for a 75-year design life."

Unified Approach

KMA's 12-member team is as local as it gets. While a couple of the staff live further north in Orem, many in the firm live in Spanish Fork, and Ricci lives the furthest south in Payson.

How do they maintain diversity of opinion with so many folks from similar upbringings?

Carter said hierarchy doesn't get in the way of good design. The best decisions for their clients may be found in the KMA office or even awaiting discovery. Christensen mentioned a field trip the KMA team took in 2023 to Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. There, the team saw elements used by the famous architect before touring an Arizona high school and witnessing different circulation styles, and how certain features could be used back home.

It helps that these people are friends,

where a culture of fun permeates the office—just ask any KMA teammate about their two-year "Smoked Salmon" gag that went beyond the architects to involve contractors and clients—they tease each other like close family.

Madsen laughed, recalling the good-natured ribbing he received from the rest of the team.

"I'm a bit of a hick," he said of his ranching lifestyle he's enjoyed in pastoral Palmyra, just west of Spanish Fork. "And those guys would call us Kevin Madsen & Associates Cattle Company."

The interview is another case in point of how KMA operates. Over half the team is in the conference room with the freedom and confidence to speak their minds. This way of working extends to every client as they decide design solutions together, especially in communities where new projects come around once in a generation.

Christensen said KMA's duty to their clients became abundantly clear after he watched a recent school board meeting—a passionate five-hour affair between the residents. The next day, Christensen declared the firm's principal responsibility: designing the most appropriate building to fit the district's needs without overspending or over-designing.

"We have to take that seriously," Christensen said of that mantle they hold as design stewards of public funds, "because it's taxpayer money going to these projects."

Making Hay in the People Business

Architecture is a relationship-based business, where clients may come for the design, but stay for the camaraderie. It's been that way since 1996 and has continued since Christensen purchased the firm from Madsen in 2017.

Carter called the relationship portion the best part of the job.

"We're working with some of these people for five years, every week," he said. "Sometimes, by the end of it, we have made lasting friendships that go beyond the jobsite."

One project led to a side-by-side ride organized by the KMA team. Carter and Christensen recalled how clients, contractors, and trade partners journeyed

to Moab, over a dozen machines in tow with double the riders aboard, and trekked through the Grand County wilderness together.

Casey Carrick, the newest member of the KMA team since joining in summer 2025 as Office Manager, said these relationships are genuine, pointing to her teammates and

saying, "These people are truly friends with those clients and school districts."

It goes beyond common interests—it's who they are.

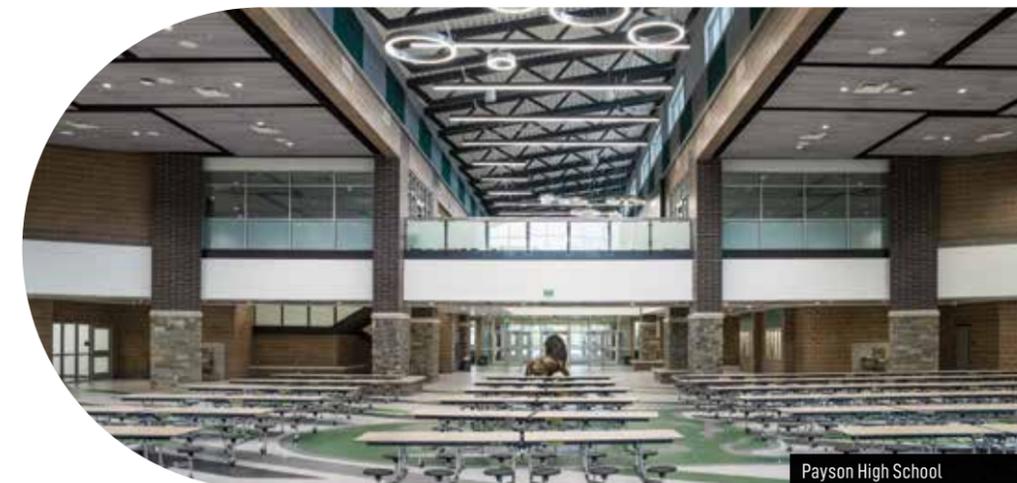
Christensen smiled as he distilled the KMA approach: "We joke, we talk their language, and we're not unreasonable to work with." ■

KMA Top Projects

Project	City - School District	Completion Date
Thanksgiving Point Museum of Ancient Life	Lehi	2001
Altamont High School	Altamont - Duchesne	2014
Richfield High School	Richfield - Sevier	2016
Single-Story Elementary School Design (8 schools)	Alpine School District	2017-2026
Union High School	Roosevelt - Duchesne	2018
Spanish Fork High School	Spanish Fork - Nebo	2024
Payson High School	Payson - Nebo	2025
Emery High School	Castle Dale - Emery	2025
Springville High School	Springville - Nebo	Fall 2026



Spanish Fork High School



Payson High School

Tick Tock from the Water Clock

While Colorado River Compact negotiations reach the finish line, how will Utah's largest water conservancy districts manage to keep supplying water as the state's dry streak continues?

By Taylor Larsen



(photo courtesy Colon Frelid)

Time is running out. Not for Utah water. Not yet. But it is for negotiations on the Colorado River.

Recently, Utah and six other states, Mexico, and Native American Tribes missed another deadline to revise the current Colorado River Compact. Like family members negotiating a handwritten will, their agreement, or lack thereof, will determine who gets what from the Colorado River in 2026 and beyond.

The compact has dictated water rights for the Upper Basin states of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming, and the Lower Basin states of Arizona, California, and Nevada since it was signed in 1922. The agreement, a result of phenomenal collaboration and compromise, has worked out as well as something written 100 years ago could.

But the compact is starting to look it's age.

As the desert sun is unkind to the skin, the prolonged megadrought of the American Southwest has been unkind to the Colorado River. Overallocation of the river, droughts, drastic population growth, and a lack of consideration for all of the water-drawing entities mean compromises are

on the horizon to ensure that each party at the table can provide Colorado River water to the estimated 40 million people who rely on it.

The seven states and the federal government have tried previous facelifts with federal guidelines and plans to draw less water, but blemishes remain. Native tribes are still awaiting corrective surgery to remove the scars of historical injustice, especially after the Supreme Court ruled in 2023 that the federal government was not required to take steps to ensure the tribes' water rights.

While Colorado River negotiations reach the end, four of Utah's biggest water conservancy districts are pushing past existential dread to create solutions with their water users and industry partners to ensure taps flow for generations to come.

Central Utah

Bruce Ward, Chief Engineer at the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (Central Utah), is hopeful. His boss, Gene Shawcroft, General Manager at Central Utah, has been involved in Colorado River discussions for years as Utah's chief negotiator.

Is it optimism?
"I'm not sure we have a choice," said Ward. It's acceptance. "This is a reality of the West we live in. The water coming down the river is all that we have."

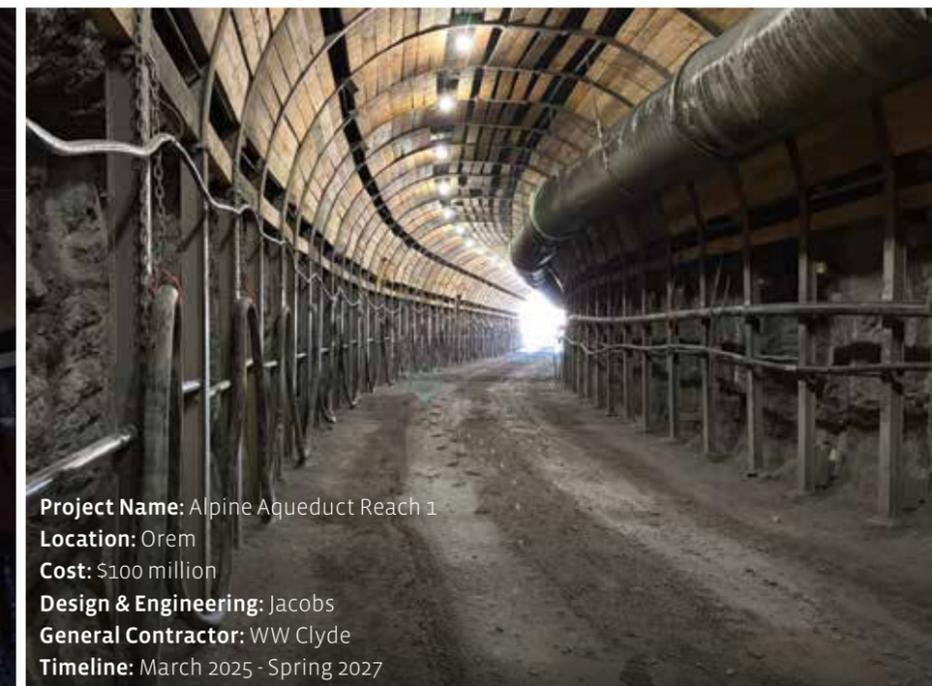
While the Colorado River gets a lot of attention, Ward explained that Central Utah and its municipal partners are closely monitoring the underground aquifers that supply much of the water for their 2 million users.

"This is a reality of the West we live in. The water coming down the river is all that we have."

— **Bruce Ward**

"Depending on growth, some aquifers have 7-10 years of healthy aquifer pumping," said Ward. "At that point, we reach a place of safe yield, where what's going in is coming out."

Central Utah wants to avoid "mining" the aquifer, or taking more out of it than is naturally replenished over time. Because, Ward said, whether it comes from the >>



Project Name: Alpine Aqueduct Reach 1
Location: Orem
Cost: \$100 million
Design & Engineering: Jacobs
General Contractor: WW Clyde
Timeline: March 2025 - Spring 2027

underground aquifer, Colorado River, or sits in the Great Salt Lake, all water is related and interdependent—“One Water”, he said of the industry term.

Even with competing interests and different water rights, Ward said Central Utah and its partner cities are rowing in the same direction, collaborating on how best to use surface and groundwater and to deploy resources for treatment and reuse.

“I think we have a fantastic partnership with these entities—they’re true partners.”

Ward is optimistic. As Central Utah grapples with population projections that show an additional 1 million users by 2065, “our [water conservancy] district is obligated to be two steps ahead, and we’re doing it.”

Central Utah has a few capital improvements and replacements in the Gantt chart, including Alpine Aqueduct Reach 1, which replaces the existing aqueduct built between 1978 and 1980.

Chris Elison, Central Utah’s Project Manager, said resilience planning for a replacement went full speed ahead after previous failures in 1985, 1986, 1988, and 2000, and a 2017 landslide event that threatened extreme failure and pushed a replacement to the top of the priority list. Intense collaboration with federal partners and the Utah Seismic Commission identified a new alignment and \$68 million in grants for a replacement pipeline to continue water delivery to the 1.6 million residents who rely on this infrastructure.

On a tour of the new Alpine Aqueduct Reach 1 under construction, Elison and Randy Lingwall, Senior Project Manager from the project’s general contractor, WW Clyde, showcased one part of the scope of this heavy civil dream boat of a project: creating a 1,000-foot-long tunnel that will connect the new alignment near the mouth of Provo Canyon to the existing pipeline and continue delivering water. WW Clyde and their trade partners on the \$100 million project are currently utilizing a Sandvik 361 roadheader to bore through the mountain. Lingwall joked that this portion of the scope

is either “the world’s most expensive gravel we’re making to get a tunnel for free, or building the tunnel and getting the gravel for free.”

While the roadheader rested during the tour, crews were hard at work placing the rock bolts and tunnel support to ensure safe drilling conditions, preparing for the installation of 108-inch welded steel pipe in the tunnel before the annular space is filled with grout.

Beyond the tunnel, the new alignment will include more than one mile of 108-inch welded steel pipe running through Orem’s Orchard Park neighborhood and away from the current alignment’s active landslide complex. Construction teams installed a thrust block containing 850 CY of concrete to manage the 1.7 million pounds of water that will eventually be delivered. There, the 108-inch pipe will connect with the bell of the ball in terms of seismic resilience—600»



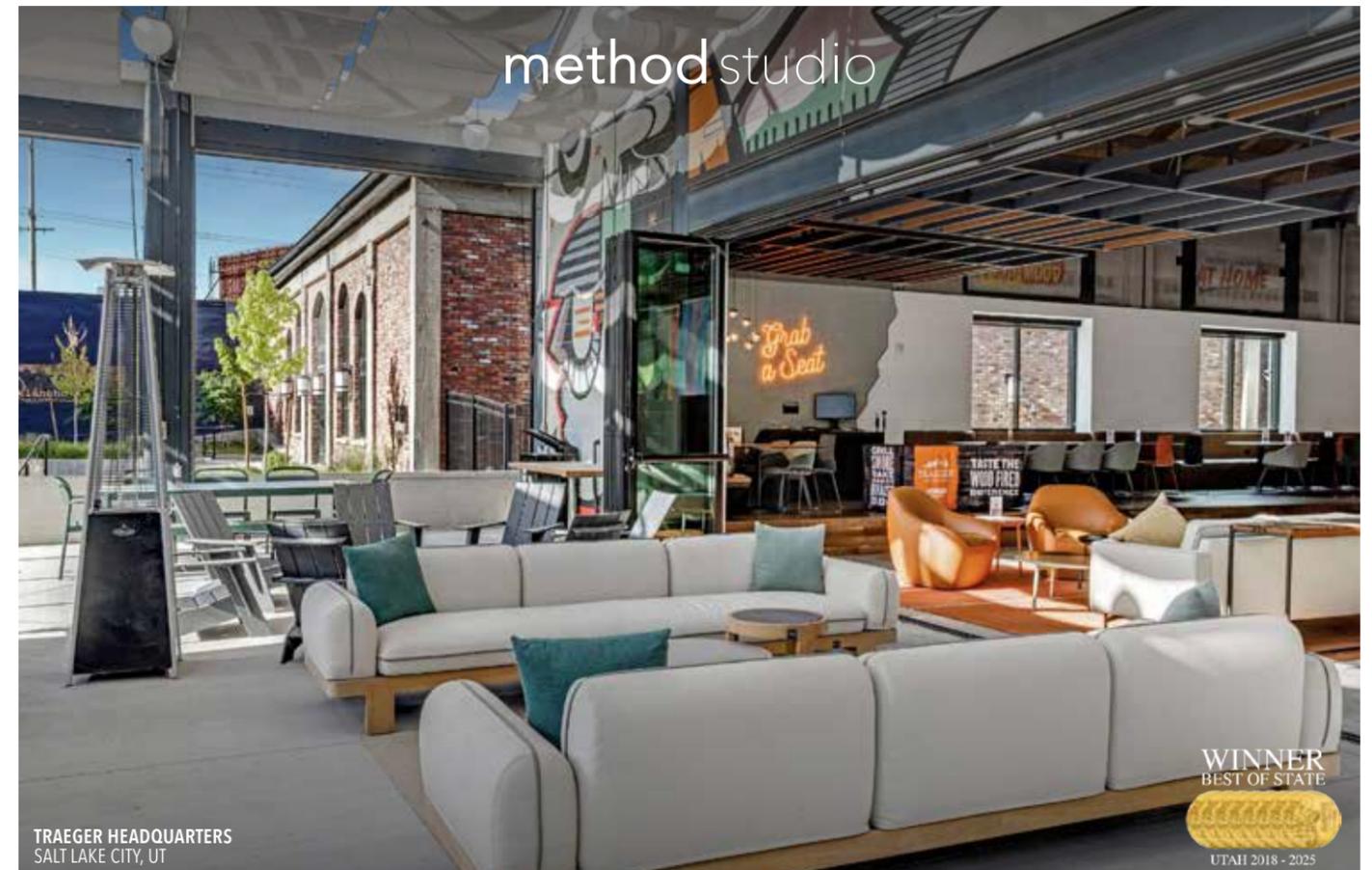
Workers on the Alpine Aqueduct Reach 1 project are utilizing a roadheader machine (pictured) to bore a tunnel through the mountain (tunnel pictured on page 57) before placing 1,000 feet of 106-inch welded steel pipe for the aqueduct’s new alignment. (Images courtesy Central Utah Water Conservancy District)

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feet of hazard-resilient ductile iron pipe (HRDIP). Elison and Lingwall explained how HRDIP, developed by Japan-based Kubota, is gasketed and designed to elongate and rotate during a seismic event to keep the aqueduct up and running.

Whether boring through a mountain or planning for capacity upgrades, Central Utah keeps water flowing via top-tier industry collaboration.

Jordan Valley

Water has always been a concern for Utah legislators and residents, said Jacob Young, General Manager of the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (Jordan Valley).

“Now, it’s risen to number one.”

November 2025 revisions to the Utah code required cities with populations of over 10,000 residents to deliver a general plan that included water use by December 31, 2025. State leaders aren’t leaving municipalities marooned. Utah’s Division of Natural Resources “Growing Water Smart” program has helped city and county water and land-use planners collaborate through guided workshops to build a sustainable, resilient water future. When land and water use planning happen together, Young said, “I believe we will be able to continue to support communities and ecosystems from the same sources of water.”

“Development from here on out has to look differently than it has up to this point.”

— Jacob Young

Strategic planning has become more important than ever as development charges forward. Jordan Valley’s latest master plan finished in 2022, “and we felt that as soon as we finished it, some of our [master] plan was outdated,” said Young. The Point, Olympia, and other developments and annexations within their jurisdiction all released plans shortly after Jordan Valley’s master plan finished.

Jordan Valley may be further along

in its development cycle than the other districts, but the area within its boundaries is far from finished. “It’s not necessarily the total demand,” said Young, “but where that demand is located.” As such, the district is focused on upgrading existing infrastructure to accommodate the roughly 800,000 users currently served and an additional 400,000 residents expected to receive their water from Jordan Valley over the next several decades.

“There are some cool projects going

on, and there’s a massive wave coming,” Young said.

Hard to resist a water pun.

As Jordan Valley supplies South Valley growth and the rest of Salt Lake County, it is currently building the \$20 million 118th South Tank Project in South Jordan. The 10-million-gallon tank was designed by Jacobs and is currently under construction, overseen by ProBuild Construction.

Another South Valley supplier project is the Southwest Aqueduct (SWA), a >>



Project Name: Southwest Aqueduct Reach 1 & Reach 2
Location: South Salt Lake County
Cost: \$18 million (SWA-1), \$35 million (SWA-2)
Construction Timeline: March 2018 - February 2020 (SWA-1) September 2025 - June 2027 (SWA-2)
Design & Engineering: Bowen Collins & Associates
General Contractor: COP Construction (SWA-1), Condie Construction (SWA-2)

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multiphase pipeline running parallel to the existing Jordan Aqueduct to provide redundancy and additional raw water supply capacity. At completion, SWA will span from the Jordan Valley Water Treatment Plant in Herriman north along 3200 West, eventually connecting with the 10200 South Pump Station and Reservoir. SWA Reach 1, the \$18 million first phase, was designed by Bowen Collins & Associates and built by COP Construction. The \$35 million SWA Reach 2 is under the same engineering and design stewardship, with Condie Construction leading ongoing construction efforts to extend the SWA from 13400 South to 11800 South.

Expansion on the Jordan Valley Water Treatment Plant is the big kahuna. The three-phase project will expand plant capacity from 180 million gallons per day (mgd) to an interim capacity of 200 mgd, followed by another expansion to its final 255 mgd capacity to meet future demand. The project includes full rebuilds of six original gravity filters, partial rebuilds of ten gravity filters, and new chemical feed systems across multiple project phases.

The additional 75 mgd of new filtration/chemical capacity will treat 16,000 acre-feet of Central Utah Project Utah Lake System supplies procured from Central Utah.

Phase 1 was designed by Brown and Caldwell, built by Vancon Construction, and completed in 2023. Phases 2 (Hazen and Sawyer) and 3 (Corollo) have both been designed. While Gerber Construction is currently building Phase 3, with completion scheduled for April 2029, construction on Phase 2 is awaiting FEMA grant money, but Young noted that the grant application process has been suspended under the Trump administration.

Whether planning for hundreds of millions of dollars in capital outlay or utilizing social media to engage Jordan Valley water users in conservation efforts, Young and the Jordan Valley team identified a core imperative in their plans: “Establishing the community’s conscious connection with water and removing the mystery and the unseen nature of water,” said Young. “There is a limit to the water

resources available in the state. That means that development from here on out has to look differently than it has up to this point.”

Washington County

Everyone in the industry knows Washington County is hot, and that’s just in development terms. Karry Rathje, Public Affairs Manager for Washington County Water Conservancy District (the district), said the organization isn’t sweating it out but is staying proactive—and comprehensive—in its approach to water stewardship.

“The cheap water has already been developed.”

— Zach Renstrom

The district currently delivers to approximately 215,000 residents and 10 million annual visitors who rely on water from the limited and variable Virgin River Basin. The basin’s available 10-year average water supply has decreased nearly 20% since the 1980s, while population in that same timeframe increased well over 350% and, according to the Kem C. Gardner Policy

Institute, is expected to nearly double by 2065.

“We’re experiencing rapid growth with limited water resources,” said Rathje. “But the district has a proactive plan to ensure our communities have a safe, reliable water supply now and in the future.”

The plan includes additional water conservation, reuse, optimizing groundwater resources, developing remaining surface supplies, and converting available agricultural water to municipal use. The five-part plan will add about 40,000 acre feet of new supply at a \$2 billion price tag.

Most of the water needed to meet future demand will come from the district’s Regional Reuse Purification System, which extends Washington County’s two-decade legacy of reusing water for crops and landscape irrigation. Future system expansions will provide a local, drought-proof water supply sufficient to serve approximately 40,000 homes, including purified water for potable reuse. Major components of the system will include three water reclamation facilities, an advanced water purification facility, four reservoirs, multiple pump stations, and more than 60 miles of pipeline when completed.

Conservation efforts in the district are worthy of gold stars. Washington County has achieved a 50% per capita reduction in water use since 2000 and has adopted Utah’s highest water-efficiency standards for new construction as development has increased. The district’s board approved a bump in impact fee rates, raising connection fees for single-family homes to \$17,000 come March 2026, so new development pays for expanding infrastructure. The district has also adopted an excess water use surcharge to encourage accountability and reduce waste among high users. The district isn’t just wielding the stick. Dangling the carrot has helped the area lead the state in participation in the grass replacement program, accounting for 51% of the grass replaced statewide since 2023.

Zach Renstrom, the district’s General Manager, explained the reasoning behind these and other changes simply: “The cheap water has already been developed.”

Beyond the Regional Water Conservation Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan created in 2025, the district has leveraged its good relationships with municipal partners to further align

development goals. The district recently approved a new policy to oversee future large commercial, industrial, and institutional water users—those using over 9 million gallons in larger cities, or 5 million gallons in the smaller cities. Oversight will come from a 16-member Administration Advisory Committee made up of the mayor and city manager for each of the district’s eight municipal customers. Approval for new projects at this threshold, like data centers, golf courses, and bottling plants, will require a thumbs-up from two-thirds of the committee.

“These eight cities share the same water supply,” said Renstrom. “This policy ensures a single community cannot approve a large water user without review and consensus of the broader community.”

As development unfolds, the district continues current projects like the \$60 million Chief Toquer Reservoir, \$22 million Confluence Park Pump Station and Pipeline, \$180 million expansion of the Quail Creek Water Treatment Plant, and \$5 million storage tanks at Sand Hollow Reservoir to beat the heat and ensure the district’s water stewardship remains top-notch.

Weber Basin

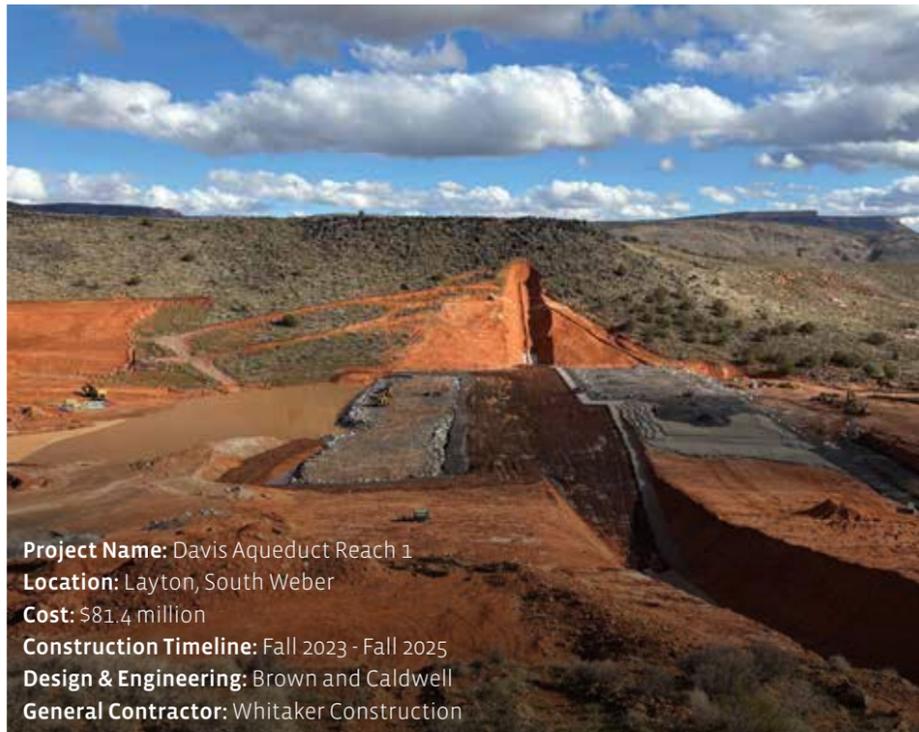
“I got it first, then it’s mine, and I’m going to use it how I have historically.”

Those words from Jon Parry, Assistant General Manager for the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District (Weber Basin), exemplify a mindset for how water has historically been treated in Weber Basin and other districts since their creation, where water rights have gone to the first user through the prior appropriations doctrine.

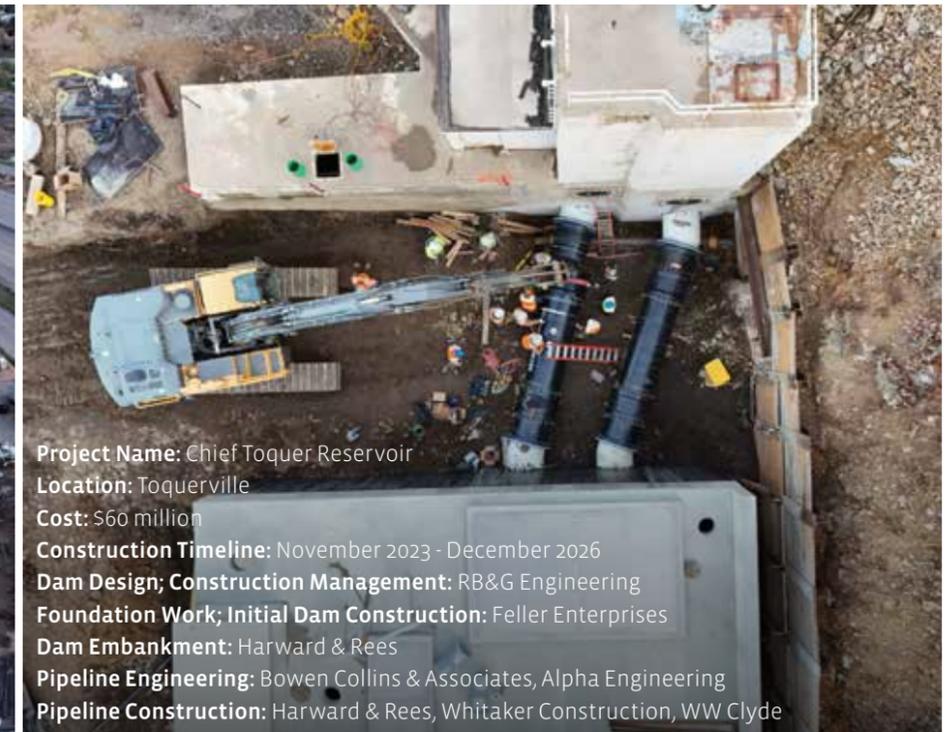
“There is not going to be a shortage of opportunities to engage in meaningful work that really does affect the quality of life for every single resident here in the state of Utah.”

— Jon Parry

Call it doctrine, policy, or culture—some or all of it needs to change for this finite resource to continue indefinitely accommodating a growing economy and maintain a certain quality of life. The shift, >>



Project Name: Davis Aqueduct Reach 1
Location: Layton, South Weber
Cost: \$81.4 million
Construction Timeline: Fall 2023 - Fall 2025
Design & Engineering: Brown and Caldwell
General Contractor: Whitaker Construction



Project Name: Chief Toquer Reservoir
Location: Toquerville
Cost: \$60 million
Construction Timeline: November 2023 - December 2026
Dam Design; Construction Management: RB&G Engineering
Foundation Work; Initial Dam Construction: Feller Enterprises
Dam Embankment: Harward & Rees
Pipeline Engineering: Bowen Collins & Associates, Alpha Engineering
Pipeline Construction: Harward & Rees, Whitaker Construction, WW Clyde

said Parry, needs to be “where water is serving its highest and best use.”

Parry, P.E. is an engineer by trade and educator by role, and said Weber Basin’s efforts have worked within the existing system to prioritize what’s in the best interest of the community as a whole by facilitating workshops and getting their users to buy in to the district’s outlook, namely: “That water is a regional resource and not an individual resource, and come up with goals and programs that help us accomplish all that we can.”

So far, the marketing is working, and mindsets are changing. The district will complete its plan to meter all secondary water system connections by 2026. By 2030, Weber Basin will begin charging for secondary water use—One Water, after all. Charging for what was once free, Parry said, will take some time to get everyone on board, but he’s confident that the goodwill between Weber Basin and its customers will continue.

“We’ve had a lot of opportunities to engage with our customer base, educate them about what’s going on, and what

to expect moving forward,” said Parry, praising “[the] great collaborative process of working with the Weber Basin water customers on plant materials, landscapes, and projects that will deliver a robust, green community that keeps water use minimal.”

Collaboration continues on the business-to-business front as Weber Basin strengthens the great partnerships it has forged with the A/E/C industry to maximize every water droplet. These relationships are more important than ever as Weber Basin looks to modernize and expand its capital infrastructure.

“We’re reaching [the] end of life expectancies for a lot of the infrastructure put in 75 years ago,” said Parry. Massive pipelines, aqueducts, treatment plants, irrigation reservoirs, and more are long past senior status, “and we’ve got them slated to have some evaluations done on them, with a lot of [money] anticipated [to] be needed to do those replacement projects and make sure that they’re able to operate for another 100 years.”

The district has \$1.5 billion scheduled for design, engineering, and construction

over the next 10 years, with much of that money prioritizing resiliency of Weber Basin’s water infrastructure, such as the award-winning Davis Aqueduct Parallel Pipeline, which began over a decade ago. Planning by Weber Basin, design by Brown and Caldwell, and construction led by Whitaker Construction helped deliver the first 2.2 miles of the 25 planned miles of pipeline running parallel to the existing Davis Aqueduct. Parry said those efforts, “give us a little bit better sleep at night as we think about the seismic conditions that we operate in.” As they wrap up the final pieces of this first phase to ready the system for irrigation season, Parry said to expect an additional five miles of parallel pipeline to go in over the next 10 years, along with many more projects to come.

“There is not going to be a shortage of opportunities to engage in meaningful work that really does affect the quality of life for every single resident here in the state of Utah,” said Parry of how leveraging A/E/C expertise is extending the goodwill to the consumer side as well. “We’ve seen amazing benefits to the public as we’ve been able to have those discussions and be able to advocate for water conservation.”

Education, collaboration, and innovation from the A/E/C community will be most welcome to help Weber Basin meet demand and achieve efficiencies. After all, Parry laughed, “You’re not going to get away from using water.”

Water use, like the Colorado River, continues to flow. Whether that remains so won’t be a decision left solely to those renegotiating the Colorado River Compact. Instead, it will come from compounding daily decisions made by conservancy districts, government leaders at every level, industry partners, and anyone who turns on the tap. Compromise and collaboration are the sobering realities needed to ensure our One Water continues to flow; the alternative is too dry. ■



(photo courtesy Gerber Construction)

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AGC OF UTAH INSTALLS GARY ELLIS AS 2026 CHAIR AT ANNUAL CONVENTION

Doug Watts, former President of St. George-based Watts Construction, honored with prestigious Eric W. Ryberg Award.

By Bradley Fullmer

If the turnout for the 104th Annual Convention for the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Utah is any indication of the current state of the construction industry in the Beehive State, 2026 will indeed be a robust year.

The popular industry convention—held January 29-30 at Little America Hotel in downtown Salt Lake—continues to draw room-busting crowds at its events. The AGC’s 2026 Awards Breakfast kicked off the convention on January 29, with the Utah chapter handing out nearly 50 awards for innovative projects and dedicated people.

The second day—an all-day event—

included entertaining keynote speakers at breakfast and lunch, along with informative breakout sessions in between. The convention was capped by an always-entertaining Installation Banquet, where Gary Ellis, President/CEO of Salt Lake-based Jacobsen Construction, was installed as 2026 AGC of Utah Chairman of the Board.

Brett Nielsen, President of Brigham City-based Whitaker Construction and 2025 AGC of Utah Chairman, thanked AGC’s staff of 13 for their efforts to elevate the association, and highlighted the work of the Construction Learning Committee (CLC), which aims to cultivate the next generation

of construction industry leaders.

“Earlier today, I made a comment that the generation that’s coming into our industry today is about 20% of our population, but they are 100% of our future,” said Nielsen. “We owe it to them to make sure we’re providing the same tools, the guidance, the leadership that we received as we were coming up in the industry.”

Ellis followed with an initial plug for Nielsen, who is in line to serve as the AGC of America’s 2030 President—a first for the Utah chapter.

“We’re excited to share Brett and his wisdom and terrific leadership to the entire



country with regard to our industry—he’ll do a great job and carry Utah in his heart,” said Ellis.

Ellis said he never imagined working in the construction industry, thinking he’d rather be a river running guide or physical therapist. Ultimately, he pursued accounting, earning a Master of Accounting from Provo-based Brigham Young University in 1995 and spending the first five years of his career as a Senior Auditor for KPMG in Salt Lake. He was hired in December 2000 at Jacobsen Construction as a Financial Controller, later ascending to his present title of President/CEO in January 2021.

“The amount of construction experience I had before I landed at Jacobsen Construction was two weeks sweeping floors at a residential construction site,” said Ellis. “I never imagined I would be part of the construction industry, but it’s been life-changing for me. Our theme for the convention this year is *Building What Matters*—I wanted to do something that mattered [...] I wanted to be part of growing something, something I could put my arms around and say, ‘wow, look what we just did together.’ That’s really what my motivation was when I found the construction industry.”

During the first five years of his career at a large corporate firm, Ellis said the gig lacked fulfillment. Joining Jacobsen opened his eyes to a new world, one he quickly gained a true passion for.

“My kids are sick and tired of me pointing out every [Jacobsen] building as we go up and down I-15, I-80—I know, I’m preaching in the choir. There are incredible

“I never imagined I would be part of the construction industry, but it’s been life-changing for me. Our theme for the convention this year is *Building What Matters*—I wanted to do something that mattered [...] I wanted to be part of growing something, something I could put my arms around and say, ‘wow, look what we just did together’”

— Gary Ellis

things that we do at Jacobsen; quite often, we talk about the ‘wow factor’. That is what we have in this group. It is the wow factor, being able to [bask] in the pride we feel.”

Ellis also thanked his team at Jacobsen for believing in the AGC’s mission and recognizing the importance of giving back to the industry.

“I’m indebted to Ted [Jacobsen] and his family for what they’ve created at Jacobsen. The day I was asked [...] to take over as President, my very first phone call was to Ted Jacobsen [...] to let him know that I commit to making sure his family name is known in good standing in this marketplace.”

Watts Truly Honored to Receive Ryberg Award

When Doug Watts took over from his father, Richard, as the second-generation leader of St. George-based Watts Construction in 2010, he honestly wasn’t sure whether the then-42-year-old general contractor would survive the Great Recession, which hit Southern Utah particularly hard.

“It was very difficult,” recalled Watts, 69. “I had Chris Boudrero (Watts Construction CEO and Watts’ nephew) working for another firm for a year because we didn’t have any work. I kept Annie (Howell, Watts Construction President) because she’s my daughter, and we had a little backlog to get us through to 2010. In 2012, it started getting a little better [...], but I remember sitting in AGC board meetings, thinking, ‘I’m not sure how long I stay on like this.’”

Watts credited former AGC President/CEO Rich Thorn for instilling confidence in him and allowing him to serve on the AGC Board, including Chairman in 2014.

In 2014, the company turned the corner and started gradually hiring back full-time staff, and over the next decade Watts, along with Howell and Boudrero, guided the company to record heights, including annual revenues of \$65 million in 2022, and \$62 million in 2023, Watts’ last year as President before retiring in December, a few months after the dedication of the Washington County Administration Building, one of the most significant projects in Watts Construction’s history.

Watts continues to keep close tabs on »



Gary Ellis, President/CEO of Jacobsen Construction, will serve as 2026 Chairman for the AGC of Utah. (opposite, left to right) Brett Nielsen, President of Whitaker Construction and 2025 AGC of Utah Chairman, passes the “hammer” to Ellis; Annie Howell, President of Watts Construction, accepts the Eric W. Ryberg Award on behalf of her father, Doug Watts; Ibi Guevara of Hunt Electric was honored with AGC’s “Service to the Industry” award; Doug Watts with the Ryberg Award.

the company, and raves about the progress being made under the leadership of Annie and Chris. He's enjoying retirement and is still a bit wistful about his career in construction, which spanned 50 years.

"Most of the time I'm thinking about the kids and interacting with them about the business and their success," said Watts, ever-proud of Watts Construction's 40-plus-

year history building Southern Utah. Watts referenced a video made for the AGC Convention, in which he was standing on a bluff overlooking St. George.

"You could point to every intersection and see something we had built," he said. "That is cool—a lot of great history there."

Watts said beyond the Washington County Administration Building, he's

particularly proud of the Washington County Senior Citizens Center and the Washington County Children's Justice Center. He also referenced the Shops at Zion on River Road—building in the early 1990s—and the Promenade retail development as key projects during the company's first decade in St. George.

"It's hard for me to comprehend my career being 'over' and looking back on it like I'm an old man," said Watts. "I've been in this business a long time. It's amazing to see how much work is going on here. Back in the day, we made a decent enough living to get the business to a point where we could turn it over to the kids. It's been a fantastic success—they're doing just great."

New AGC Staff Additions



The AGC of Utah announced a major staff change, with the hiring of **Cindy Powell** as its new District Manager for Southern Utah. Powell brings more than 25 years of combined experience in construction, marketing, and operations, along with a strong understanding of the region's growth and the needs of its contractors and communities.

Powell began her career in the construction industry, where she owned and operated a residential construction company in Northern Utah for more than two decades. During that time, she built a reputation for relationship-driven leadership, efficient operations, and community-focused work. Her hands-on industry experience provides a practical perspective on the challenges contractors face and the collaboration required to support a thriving construction environment.

She later worked at Utah Tech University in the athletic department, managing business operations and special events, supporting day-to-day operations and major initiatives during a period of significant change for the university. Her time there coincided with the institution's transition to NCAA Division I and a university name change and rebrand.



Powell holds a Bachelor of Marketing and Communications from Utah Tech University and is known for her strength in building authentic relationships, improving processes, and connecting organizations with their communities.

"Construction plays a critical role in the continued growth and stability of Southern Utah," Powell said. "Our region is experiencing rapid population growth,

increasing workforce demands, and the logistical realities that come with building in a desert environment."

In her role as District Manager, Powell will focus on strengthening AGC of Utah's relationships across Southern Utah, supporting contractors and industry partners, and expanding workforce and community initiatives throughout the region.



The AGC also announced the hiring of **Blaine Cantwell** as its new Workforce Development Specialist, strengthening the association's efforts

to connect Utah's growing construction industry with the skilled workforce needed to sustain it. >>

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Cantwell grew up in Davis County and graduated from Northridge High School in 2020. He is currently completing his degree at Weber State University, with plans to graduate in spring 2027. Prior to joining AGC, Cantwell spent five years at America First Credit Union, including the past two years working in Human Resources as a Recruiting Specialist. In that role, he focused heavily on workforce development—partnering with educators, students, and job candidates to build talent pipelines within the organization.

In addition to his professional background, Cantwell has spent the last five years serving as an Assistant Coach for a high school debate team, a role that reflects his passion for mentorship, education, and developing young talent.

“The need for skilled construction workers in Utah is real and immediate,” Cantwell said. “Construction companies, educators, and legislators have all recognized that the industry is growing faster than the workforce needed to support it. I believe AGC of Utah can play a critical role in bringing those groups together, and I’m excited to help strengthen the future of Utah’s construction industry.”

In his new role, Cantwell will work closely with educators, students, contractors, and industry partners to expand workforce development initiatives, support career pathways, and help address labor shortages across Utah’s construction sector. ■

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ST. GEORGE OFFICE



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District Manager



Tawny Staker
Administrative Assistant



Valorie Twyford
Administrative assistant



Jeff Shoaf
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RICK ANDRITSCH
2026 Board President

AGC OF AMERICA

Building/Industrial Division Projects of the Year	Project	Contractor	Owner
Energy/Industrial	High Temp Water Plant Seismic Upgrades	Gramoll Construction	University of Utah
Government/Public Building	Trans-Jordan Sandy Transfer Station	Big-D Construction	Trans-Jordan Cities
K-12 Education	Deseret Peak High School	Hughes General Contractors	Tooele County School District
Higher Education	The University of Utah L.S. Skaggs Applied Science Building	Okland Construction	University of Utah
Cultural	The Ruth at doTERRA	Layton Construction	Hale Center Foundation for the Arts
Civil/Public Works (Under 50M)	5200 West 6200 South Finished Water Reservoir	Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction Company, LLC	Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Civil/Public Works (Over 50M)	Central Water Project - Groundwater Polishing Plant	Alder Construction Company	Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Healthcare (Under 50M)	Fort Duchesne Health Clinic	BHI	Indian Health Service
Healthcare (Over 50 Million)	Logan Regional Hospital Reconfiguration Project	Okland Construction	Intermountain Health
Landscape/Urban Development (Under 25M)	Weber State University Flaming 'W' (Mountain Monogram)	Jacobsen Construction	Weber State University
Landscape/Urban Development (Over 25M)	Utahrapator State Park	Hogan & Associates Construction	State of Utah DFCM
Manufacturing	Great Basin Cabinetry	Barr, Co	Great Basin Cabinetry
Renovation/Restoration (Under 50M)	Washington Heritage Reception Center	SIRQ Construction	Washington City
Renovation/Restoration (Over 50M)	Asher Adams Hotel & Union Pacific Depot Renovation	Okland Construction	The Athens Group
Interior/Tenant Improvement	Ogden Eccles Conference Center Renovation	Hogan & Associates Construction	Weber County Ogden Eccles Conference Center
Office	Wavetronix Springs	Jacobsen Construction	Wavetronix
Multi-Family Residential/Hospitality	The Residences at Sugar Alley	KIER Construction	Lowe Property Group
Sports/Recreation (Under 50M)	UCCU Soccer Stadium	SIRQ Construction	Utah Valley University
Sports/Recreation (Over 50M)	The Ballpark at America First Square	Okland Construction	Miller Sports + Entertainment, Larry H. Miller Real Estate
Retail	General RV Supercenter South Weber	Eckman Construction	General RV
Worship	The Well Church TI	Engage Contracting Inc.	The Well Church
OVERALL Building/Industrial Division	Black Desert Resort	SIRQ Construction	Reef Capital

Transportation/Utility Infrastructure Division Projects of the Year	Project	Contractor	Owner
Active Transportation	Bluffdale 14400 South Road Construction and Utility Upgrade	Newman Construction Inc.	City of Bluffdale
Rural Transportation	SR-96 Clear Creek to MP 18	Hales Sand & Gravel	Utah Department of Transportation
Urban Transportation	SR-203; US-89 to SR-39	Geneva Rock Products	Utah DOT, Region 1
Transportation (0-5M)	I-15; Arizona State Line to Cottonwood Creek	Intermountain Slurry Seal INC	Utah DOT, Region 4
Transportation (5-15M)	US-191 Realignment Near Simplot-Reconstruct & Widening	Burdick Materials	Utah DOT, Region 3
Transportation (Over 15M)	I-15; SR-97 (5600 South) Widening	Sand Ridge Constructors (Granite Construction & W.W. Clyde & Co. JV)	Utah Department of Transportation
Airport/Transit	Provo Airport Terminal Apron Expansion	Geneva Rock Products, Inc.	Provo City
Utility Infrastructure (500,000 - 5M)	RMP Northeast to Medical 46Kv Project	Newman Construction Inc.	Rocky Mountain Power Pacificorp
Utility Infrastructure (Over 5M)	Sevier Bridge Dam Rehabilitation Project Phase II	Ames Construction, Inc.	CSBR Company
Utility Infrastructure (Over 100M)	Nutrient Removal - BNR Basins/PEPS/RAS Selector Project	Gerber Construction, Inc.	Central Valley Water Reclamation Facility
OVERALL Transportation/Utility Infrastructure Division	Bangerter South Interchanges DB and Bangerter 4700 S. PDB	RLW/Clyde a Joint Venture with Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction Company and W.W. Clyde & Co.	Utah Department of Transportation

Individual/Company Awards	Project	Contractor	Owner
Outstanding Architect Firm	VCBO Architecture		
Consultant/Engineering Firm	Gerhart Cole		
Owner	Southern Utah University		
UDOT Employee	Codee Raymond		
DFCM Employee	Andy Marr		
Service to the Industry	Ibi Guevara		
Eric W. Ryberg 2026	Doug Watts - Watts Construction		

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THE EAST VILLAGE COMES TO DEER VALLEY



Rendering of "The Ribbon" skating rink and East Village plaza. (courtesy Extell Development Company)

New York-based Extell Development has gone full speed ahead on a transformational development of Mayflower Mountain.

By Taylor Larsen

*Start spreadin' the news
I'm leavin' today
I want to be a part of it...*

I can hear everyone singing the final line:
Deer Valley Resooooooort

Fine. Frank Sinatra may not have had après ski on the mind in “New York, New York”, but if the famous singer

were alive today, I bet he would want to be a part of Deer Valley’s East Village—even with no relation to the New York City neighborhood—and the transformational development ongoing across Mayflower Mountain and Deer Valley Resort.

East Village—Deer Valley Style
“Deer Valley East Village is a long-

anticipated project that will serve as the heart of the expanded terrain at Deer Valley Resort,” said Gary Barnett, Founder and Chair of Extell Development Company (Extell), in a press release. “With careful planning, we’ve curated a village that will redefine luxury and offer unparalleled amenities for our guests.”

The ability to curate such luxury came



from 10 years of collecting. Since 2015, Extell has purchased over 20 land parcels, assembling well over 5,000 acres for development. Extell partnered with the Military Installation Development Authority (MIDA) and Reef Capital Partners (Reef) to create a highly capable development team. These efforts set the stage for the 2023

agreement between the developer and Alterra Mountain Group (Alterra), Deer Valley’s parent company, to fold Extell’s East Village property into its existing resort operations—what Deer Valley President and COO Todd Bennett called, “Your new Deer Valley.”

Barnett, speaking of what’s to come with this partnership and the billions of

“Extell and Deer Valley collaborated to craft a village and ski experience where luxury, adventure, and experience come together effortlessly.”

— Gary Barnett

dollars of work set to go in on the mountain, said, “Extell and Deer Valley collaborated to craft a village and ski experience where luxury, adventure, and experience come together effortlessly.”

Thus began the monumental transformation of Mayflower Mountain.

Big Name Arrivals

Two projects helped get the party started in the East Village. The Residences at Pioche Village delivered four buildings comprising 400-plus condominiums built by New Star General Contractors in December 2023. Although the project is outside the epicenter of ongoing development, it is becoming increasingly important to the area, as MIDA recently purchased one of the buildings to set aside 42 units of workforce housing.

The first finished project within the epicenter was the award-winning Grand Hyatt Deer Valley, designed by OZ Architecture and built by Jacobsen Construction, completed in 2024. Extell partnered with MIDA to develop the hotel on military land, offering 100 rooms at a discounted rate for service members. The opulent hotel and condo property introduced a total of over 380 guest rooms, 40 suites, 55 private residences, and nearly 40,000 SF of conference space. >>

Deer Valley Expansion

And it's just the beginning.

On a recent tour of the East Village, Michael Woisin, Extell's Sr. VP of Construction in Utah, detailed the immense manpower required to bring the vision to life. The six tower cranes currently operating there, along with a handful of other cranes, combine with dozens of concrete trucks heading up and down the mountain to support around 1,000 construction workers on site, driving projects of all sizes.

Reef is developing multiple residential properties in the coming years. On the single-family side, Marcella at Deer Valley has already sold out the 143 homesites in the future private community, which is currently under construction. Marcella Landing will deliver a gated community of 50 ski-in/ski-out luxury townhomes designed by Olson Kundig. Cormont will deliver five residential condo towers and a vibrant central plaza, with construction completed in 2027 and 2028, and local architectural experience provided by FFKR Architects.

The big brands are coming, too. Four Seasons Resort and Residences Deer Valley,

designed by ODA Architecture and built by Jacobsen Construction, will deliver 134 guest rooms and suites, as well as 123 for-sale residences, with completion in 2028. Canopy by Hilton will open a 180-key hotel near Pioche Village. The property will feature architecture by The Richardson Design Partnership and interior design by DLR/Brayton Hughes and will open its doors



in summer 2026. Waldorf Astoria Deer Valley Resort and Residences was announced in late January, with plans to bring 132 guest suites and 105 for-sale residences near Deer Valley's Green Monster, the resort's 4.85-mile ski run—Utah's longest. With architectural design from KPF and interiors by AvroKO, the project will open its doors in 2028.

Beyond the ski-in/ski-out access at many of the above properties, the East Village will also feature a skier services building and an extensive, tiered pedestrian plaza designed by ODA for year-round enjoyment when completed. The building will serve as the heart of the ski village, surrounded by the "ski beach" at the base of the mountain—with a future holiday

market, a snow maze, and The Ribbon's state-of-the-art ice-skating circuit planned for winter months. In summer, the area will be activated by a music festival, farmer's market, outdoor movie screenings, and other events.

Ski Infrastructure Ready for 25/26 Season
The East Village will be the epitome of



luxury when the \$5 billion development is completed, but Deer Valley has also put massive development into the recreation portion of the mountain through the resort's Expanded Excellence Initiative.

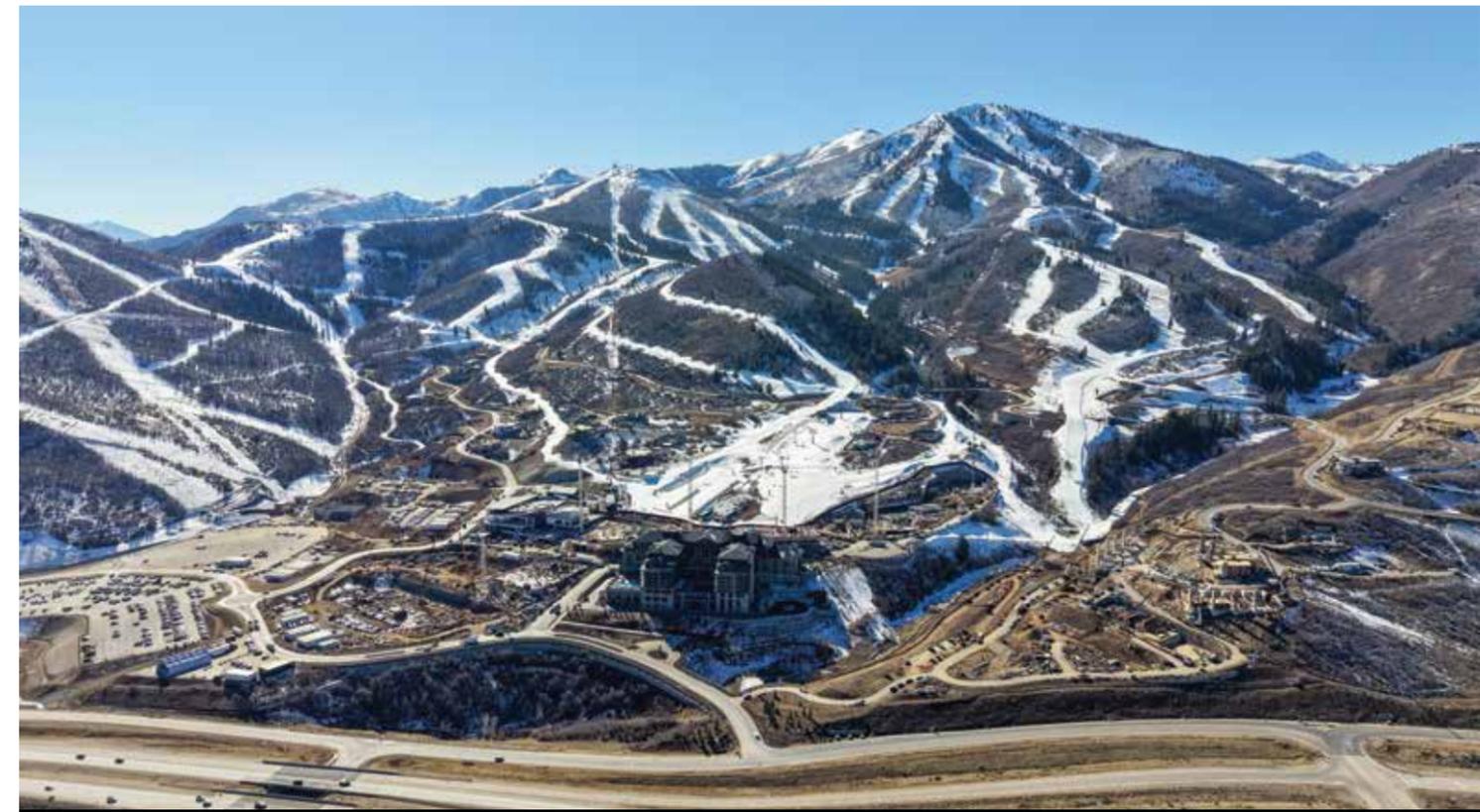
Garrett Lang has been one of the Deer Valley team members overseeing these developments. He and his now-wife came out to Deer Valley in 2011 for a ski season, and the two have never looked back. The same forward vision applies to Deer Valley as it continues to transform the mountain with ski infrastructure, doubling the amount of skiable terrain at the resort since 2023, from 2,000 to 4,300 acres today.

Deer Valley's eastward expansion had been percolating for decades before he arrived, said Lang, Senior Director of Mountain Operations for Deer Valley, "but never on this scale."

Lang detailed that new terrain has received expanded ski infrastructure over the last two years. The mountain now hosts ten new chairlifts (with 31 total), three new surface carpets (with eight total), 100 new runs (with over 200 total), and a massive increase in snowmaking capabilities—just >>



Construction on the East Village Express gondola base terminal (above) was challenging, but more straightforward than construction of the East Village Express gondola terminal on Bald Mountain (pictured), which required the help of a Chinook helicopter to deliver lift towers to further expand supporting recreational infrastructure. (photos courtesy Deer Valley Resort)



Aerial photography looking west shows ongoing vertical construction in the East Village as well as new ski runs created through Deer Valley's Expanded Excellence Initiative. (photo by Richard Green, Don Green Photography; terrain map above courtesy Deer Valley Resort)

Deer Valley Expansion

in time for an unseasonably warm and dry 2025/2026 season.

Lang expressed confidence in the resort's snowmaking operations to deliver as skiers await Mother Nature's return. Over 1,000 new snow guns are supplied by four new pump houses and 80 miles of air and water pipe, all installed in preparation for the ongoing winter season and beyond. "You'd have to go to Europe to see [a snowmaking system] like this," Lang added. Between 80-90% of the snowmaking system is automated, Lang added, with a maximum capacity of 19,000 gallons of water per minute, helping to cover over 880 acres across the mountain. Plans are in place to add infrastructure to expand snowmaking coverage to 925 acres. Let it snow, indeed.

Even with finished and ongoing construction on lifts, snowmaking capabilities, utilities, and a recent ribbon-

cutting for the East Village Gondola—the largest lift project within the Expanded Excellence Initiative—Lang reported no impacts on skier safety.

Better yet, he said, the massive construction scope has been a talking point for fascinated guests who get to see development move forward. "You have a firsthand view of a staggering amount of construction," Lang said of the views from the slopes. "People comment all the time on the amount of cranes down there [in the East Village]."

Mountain design from Deer Valley's longstanding partners at SE Group, under leadership from Chris Cushing, Principal, means "runs have the same Deer Valley feel," said Lang. Deer Valley is internationally renowned for "blue groomers", and that reputation will only grow with the new terrain. "It's one of the

best things about the expansion, that it's really integrated—it's seamless, with the same look and feel, with the same Deer Valley experience," Lang said, detailing how the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of the resort expansion has become extra special since opening it up to guests.

As the world watches the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics at the time of publication, Deer Valley's Expanded Excellence Initiative and the ongoing development of the East Village are preparing the area for the spotlight as athletes and visitors travel to Utah for the 2034 Winter Olympics.

It's time to follow Sinatra's advice and "start spreadin' the news" about what's going on at Mayflower Mountain—you'll want to be a part of it. Lang concluded: "It's a good time to be at Deer Valley." ■



Deer Valley's skiable acreage has doubled within the last few years, going from 2,000 acres in 2023, to 4,300 today. According to Garrett Lang, Senior Director of Mountain Operations for Deer Valley, much of that acreage will be the "blue groomers" (pictured) for which the resort has earned its stellar reputation. (Image courtesy Deer Valley Resort)



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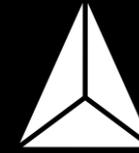


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