UTAH CONSTRUCTION + DESIGN

JULY | AUGUST 2026

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+ Clyde Celebrates Century Mark
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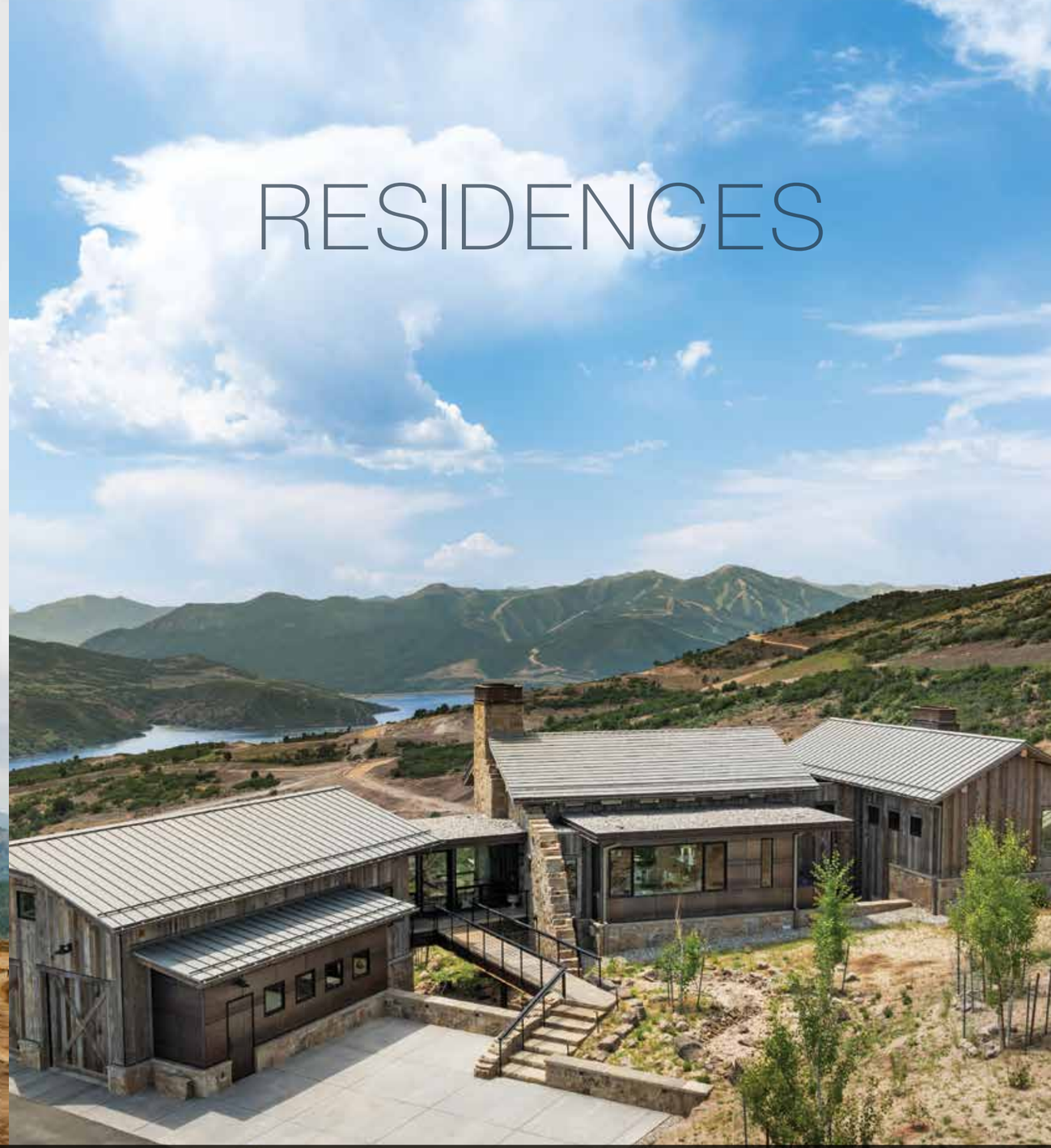

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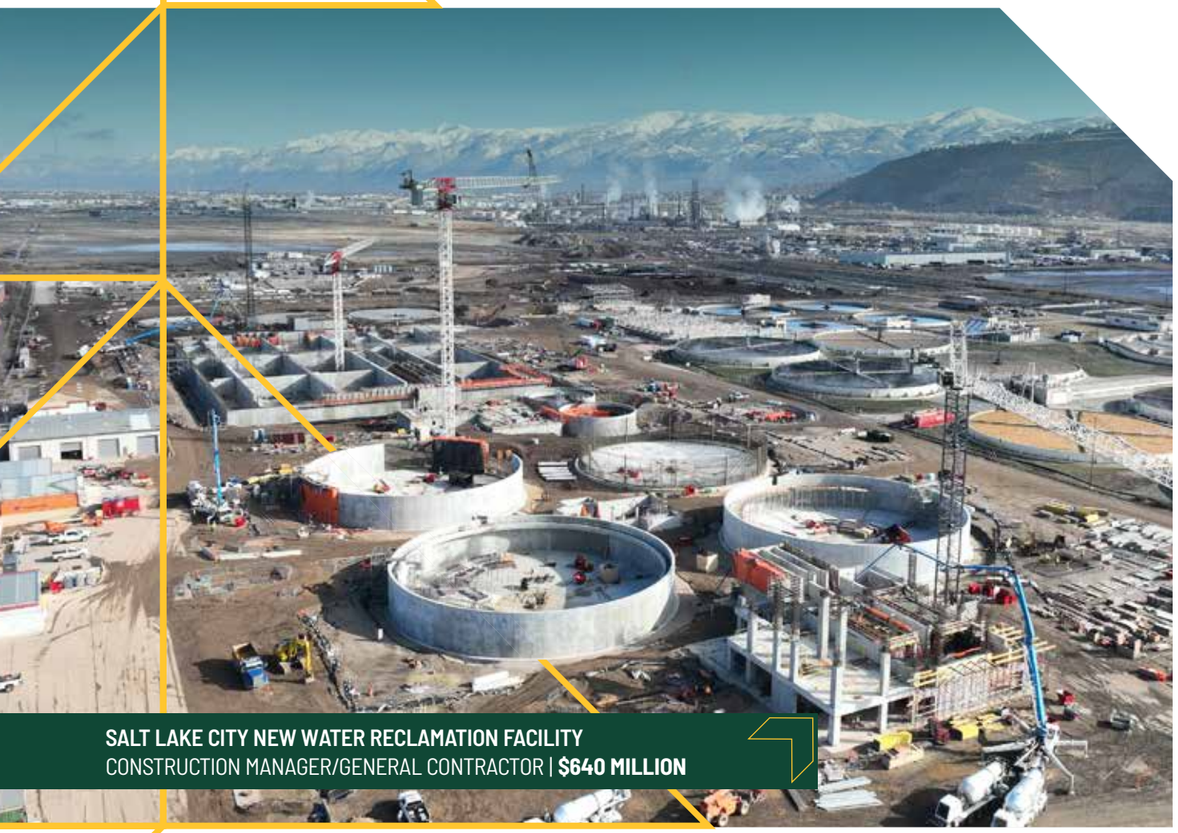

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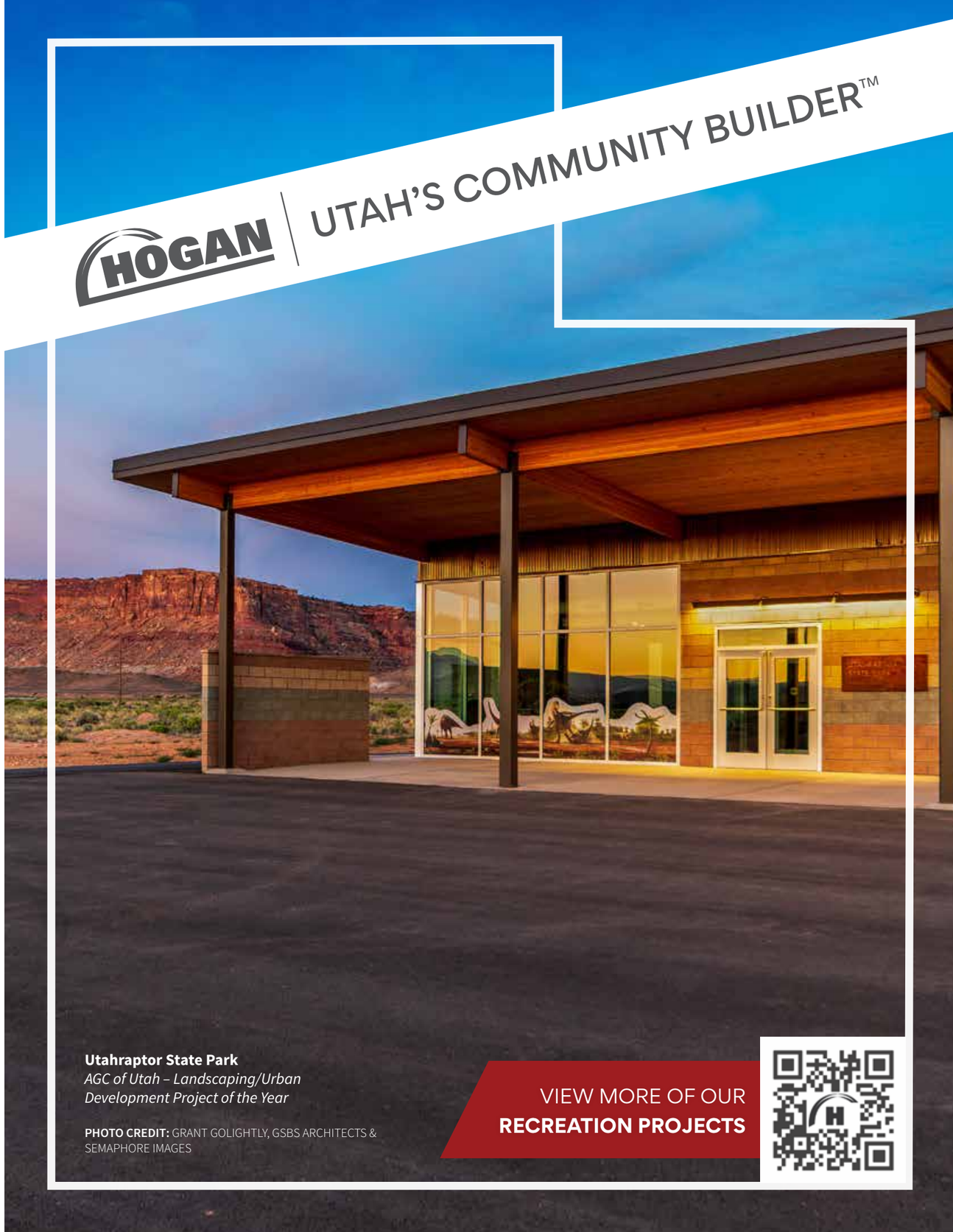

Utahraptor State Park
AGC of Utah – Landscaping/Urban Development Project of the Year

PHOTO CREDIT: GRANT GOLIGHTLY, GSBS ARCHITECTS & SEMAPHORE IMAGES

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RECREATION PROJECTS

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Features

On the cover: The North Capitol Building's other-worldly skylight was designed, built, and installed by Lehi-based Holdman Studios, a remarkable example of the firm's stained-glass craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail. (photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO Architecture)

Four Diverse Firms Mark Significant Milestones; We're Only Immortal for a Limited Time

When we started ***Utah Construction + Design*** more than 13 years ago—January 2013 was our debut issue—we made a conscious decision that spotlighting various A/E/C firms who were celebrating important, historic anniversary milestones would be a consistent part of our editorial content.

Including the four firms profiled in this issue, we have published 108 anniversary profiles to date—a diverse mix of architects, engineers, contractors, suppliers, and associations. I personally relish the process of writing these profiles, as it gives me an opportunity to interview past and current executives, get to know them better, and take a deep dive into their careers and the history of the firm in general.

Of those 108 profiles, an astounding 12 are firms or associations marking 100th anniversaries, including Cache Valley Electric, Industrial Supply, AGC of America, Okland Construction, Woodbury Corporation, AIA Utah, AGC of Utah, Jacobsen Construction, Granite Construction, MHTN Architects, and Paulsen Construction—with W.W. Clyde & Co. (Clyde Companies) joining that illustrious group this year.

W.W. Clyde & Co. was founded in 1926 in Springville—my mother Suzanne's hometown and a city I grew particularly fond of as a child. We visited our beloved grandparents often, in addition to spending a week in the summer helping tend to the needs of my grandfather "Papa" while my grandmother "Meema" went to stay with my mom or dear Aunt Jane. My grandparents were well aware of W.W. Clyde and the impact of his prominent construction company—Meema ran in the same social circles and was friends with W.W.'s second wife, Jen—so I've always paid attention to the company's progress, and I have been fortunate to interview Wilford Clyde several times over the years and get to know this great man on a more personal level.

In addition to **Clyde's 100th**, other anniversary profiles include mechanical contractor **Palmer-Christiansen's 80th**, general contractor **Wadman Corporation's 75th**, and concrete supplier American **Eagle Ready Mix's 10th**. Congrats on these milestones!

Another highlight in this issue was conducting Q&A interviews with **Rob Moore** of **Big-D Construction** and **Tracy Stocking** of **TSA Architects**.

This year marks Moore's 50th anniversary at Big-D, having joined founder Dee "Big Dee" Livingood in 1976 as a young man in his early 20s eager to make his mark in the world. He's certainly done that, with Big-D having blossomed under Moore's watch into one of the nation's largest general contractors, ranking No. 44 on *ENR's 2026 Top 400 Contractors* list, based on 2025 revenues of more than $3.6 billion, a record number for the firm.

This year also marks a major shift in Stocking's life as he formally retired from TSA Architects, a firm he founded in 1996. He will continue working in a part-time role as President Emeritus, designing healthcare projects he hand picks to work on while handing the reigns of the company to a new generation of leaders led by President Nathan Murray and Vice President Doug Banks.

Stocking and I have bonded over our passion for the music of **Rush**—Canada's most famous progressive rock band—who are back touring after an 11-year hiatus following the death of legendary drummer/lyricist Neil Peart January 7, 2020, from glioblastoma cancer.

With a talented new drummer in the fold, Annika Nilles, frontman/bassist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson—both 73 years old—have dialed back the clock and are shredding like a couple of 20-something youngsters.

My wife and I saw Rush's second concert on the band's "Fifty Something Tour" June 9 in Los Angeles—we also have tickets for October 10 in Seattle—while Stocking is taking his 12-year-old grandson to the September 17 show in Cleveland. One of Stocking's favorite songs is "Dreamline" from the 1991 *Roll the Bones* album. It contains this epic lyrical passage:

We are young
Wandering the face of the earth
Wondering what our dreams might be worth
Learning that we're only immortal
For a limited time

As I approach the mid-point of my final year in my 50s (!), that lyric resonates more and more with the blazing passage of time.

July-August is our second-most popular issue due in part to our annual **Top Utah General Contractors** rankings. This year we had a record 32 firms participate, including 25 that disclosed respective revenues from 2025.

Our cover story is the remarkable **North Capitol Building**, one of the most prominent and challenging projects of the past decade, with construction spanning three-plus years; it marks the final major building on the **Utah State Capitol Complex**. Within the NCB is the first-ever **Museum of Utah**—executed brilliantly by the project team—a much-needed space that documents key aspects of the Beehive State's history via vibrant, interactive displays.

Other content in this issue includes features on UTA's $109 million **Midvalley Express** Bus Rapid Transit project and the $50 million **James LeVoy Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation** at the University of Utah, along with trends in the **mass timber** and **commercial furniture** industries. We also have a section highlighting **2026 Top New Projects**, with information on a dozen exciting new projects breaking ground this year.

With the end of summer, we're gearing up for the final four months of the year and our upcoming **Most Outstanding Projects of the Year** competition. Our **2026 MOP Awards** event is slated for December 10 at Little America Hotel in downtown Salt Lake City.

We look forward to seeing your firm's project submissions!

Regards,

Bradley Fullmer

UTAH CONSTRUCTION+DESIGN

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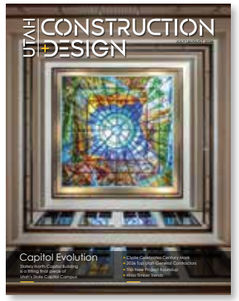


Utah Construction + Design is published seven (7) times a year. Postage paid in Salt Lake City, UT.

Subscribers: If Postal Service alerts us that magazine is undeliverable to present address, we need to receive corrected address. Postmaster: Send address changes to 2075 S Pioneer Rd. STE B, Salt Lake City UT 84104. To subscribe, contribute editorial content, or for Advertising rates/Media Kit, please email lmarshall@utahcdmag.com.

Vol. 14 No. 4

Coming in the September issue of *UC+D:*
Wheeler Machinery 75th Anniversary
Higher Education Projects
Top Utah Engineering Firm Rankings

2026 Most Outstanding Projects Competition

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15th, 2026

UC+D is proud to announce its 14th Annual Outstanding Projects of the Year competition for 2026, which honors the very best commercial construction and design projects in the State of Utah that were 90-100% completed within the 2026 calendar year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31). Projects will be considered in a wide range of categories including (but not limited to) the following:

Project of the Year
(Overall Most Outstanding Project)
Commercial/Mixed-Use
Commercial/Office
Commercial/Retail
Community/Cultural
Concrete/Structures
Concrete/Tilt-Up
Design/Build
Entertainment
Green/Sustainable
Healthcare (Large)
Healthcare (Small)
Higher Education
Highway Over $10 M
Highway Under $10 M
Hospitality/Resort
Industrial
K-12
Mass Transit/Airport
Multi-Family
Municipal/Utility
Private Over $10 M
Private Under $10 M
Public Under $10 M
Publisher's Pick
Renovation/Restoration
Specialty Contracting: Electrical
Specialty Contracting: Masonry
Specialty Contracting: Mechanical
Sports/Recreation
Tenant Improvement
Water/Wastewater

Submittals will be judged by a panel of A/E/C industry professionals and awarded based on a number of criteria.

ELIGIBILITY

1. The project must be located in Utah.
2. The project must be 90-100% completed in 2026
3. Firms can submit multiple projects in multiple categories.
The most successful entries include input from various team members, including the A/E firms, general contractor, & owner.

JUDGING CRITERIA

1. Contribution to the Industry and Community
2. Innovation in Design and Construction
3. Overcoming Unique Challenges/Obstacles
4. Safety, Quality and Craftsmanship
5. Aesthetics/Design

PHOTOGRAPHS/DIGITAL IMAGES

Firms should plan on submitting a minimum of twelve (12) photos (max 24), all high resolution files (minimum 5" x 7", 300 dpi, .jpg preferred). Firms can also submit other documents, including renderings, floor plans, etc. Applicants need to ensure they have total permission to copy and submit photographs to *Utah Construction + Design* for publication without limits. Any liability for copyright violations will be borne solely by the applicant.

SUBMISSION/ENTRY FEE

Additional information about the competition as well as entries may be submitted online at www.utahcdmag.com/mop
Questions may be emailed to Ladd Marshall at: lmarshall@utahcdmag.com

There is a $80 entry fee per submitted project. Fees will be invoiced after project submissions are received.

SAVE THE DATE

***UC+D* will host an**
OUTSTANDING PROJECTS AWARDS BREAKFAST, Thursday, DEC.10th
Registration from 7-8:20 a.m., Breakfast at 8:20 a.m. sharp. Program will run from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Flagship Development Breaks Ground at The Point

Granite acquires Kenny Seng Construction; Boise-based erstad Architecture merges with FFKR; Another huge data center slated for Eagle Mountain.

For years, The Point development in Draper has existed primarily as a promise—a bold vision to transform the former Utah State Prison site into one of the nation's premier mixed-use innovation districts. Master plans, legislative action, infrastructure improvements, and public meetings laid the foundation.

On June 29th, The Point Partners officially broke ground on the project's first vertical development, launching construction on what officials describe as the flagship district of Utah's largest urban redevelopment effort. The ceremony marked far more than the start of another construction project, but represented the beginning of a new chapter for the 600-acre property at the Point of the Mountain, where public investment and private development are converging to create a walkable community designed for living, working, entertainment, and innovation.

"Today is a momentous occasion and a historic milestone," said Mike Ambre, Executive Director for The Point (Point of the Mountain State Land Authority). "In 2018, Utah's leaders envisioned this site as a world-class innovation community that would create economic opportunity, enhance quality of life, and serve as a model for thoughtful growth."

Selected in 2025, The Point Partners is a joint venture consisting of Dallas-based Lincoln Property Company, Salt Lake-based Colmena Group, and Draper-based Wadsworth Development Group (WDG)

"For years, this site has represented great potential. Today, it becomes something much more concrete: visible progress," said Kip Wadsworth, CEO of WDG.

A $2.3 Billion Investment

The groundbreaking launches approximately $2.3 billion in private investment, supported by another $165 million in public infrastructure improvements completed by the State of Utah.

That infrastructure has quietly transformed the former prison site over the past several years. Roadways, utilities, water and sewer systems, storm drainage, grading, parks, trail connections, and other site improvements have been installed to prepare the property for vertical construction. Improvements to Porter Rockwell Boulevard and regional trail systems have also helped position the development for long-term growth.

With those foundational elements now in place, developers can begin constructing the first buildings that will ultimately define the community character.

Creating the Heart of the Community

At the center of the project is The Promenade, a pedestrian-oriented main street stretching 2,000 feet through the heart of the district. Unlike a traditional suburban shopping center, The Promenade is envisioned as an urban gathering place where wide sidewalks, outdoor dining, public plazas, and street-level retail create an active environment throughout the day and evening.

> "For years, this site has represented great potential. Today, it becomes something much more concrete: visible progress."
>
> —Kip Wadsworth

Restaurants, shops, entertainment venues, and public gathering spaces are intended to encourage walkability while serving both residents and visitors. The design emphasizes people over vehicles, reinforcing the project's broader vision of creating a transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood where daily activities can occur within walking distance.

Mixed-Use Residential and Retail Building Among First

A mixed-use residential project featuring 363 apartment units above approximately 42,000 square feet of ground-floor retail will be one of the first structures built and establishes an important component of the long-term strategy: creating an immediate residential population capable of supporting restaurants, retail, and neighborhood services from the outset.

Renderings of The Point in Draper, one of the most exciting developments in the U.S. right now that will transform the southern end of the Salt Lake Valley. A groundbreaking ceremony marking commencement of vertical building was held June 29. (renderings courtesy of The Point Partners)

The apartments will contribute to the broader goal of providing diverse housing opportunities while creating an environment where residents can live, shop, dine and recreate without relying exclusively on automobiles. Phase I is expected to include 3,000 multifamily units.

5,000-seat Indoor Event Center an Economic Driver

A signature element is a 5,000-seat indoor event center that is designed to host concerts, conferences, performances, sporting events, and community gatherings throughout the year.

"What you are seeing here today is not one standalone project. It is the start of a complete district designed around the way people want to spend their time—living near daily conveniences and friends, enjoying great food, building businesses, and connecting to the outdoors," said Wadsworth.

A City of its Own

Although construction is just beginning, the flagship district represents only a fraction of the community ultimately envisioned for The Point.

The master plan calls for 15,000-plus residents living within a walkable urban environment supported by 2 million SF of office space and 220,000 SF of retail.

Future neighborhoods will be connected by parks, trails and open spaces, including the Central Green and the River-to-Range regional trail system.

Innovation Alley is intended to attract technology companies, research organizations, and entrepreneurial businesses, reinforcing Utah's growing reputation as a national center for innovation. Together, the various components are designed to create a complete community where housing, employment, recreation, and entertainment exist within a compact, transit-oriented setting.

"I will just tell you that my only concern—and I said this often—was that we would think too small, that we would dream too small, when we have this once—not just in a generation opportunity—but truly a once-in-a-maybe-multi-lifetime opportunity to do something like this, something that is really global in nature," said Utah Governor Spencer Cox. "There's nothing like this anywhere else in the United States, and maybe anywhere in the world right now. And the good news is that the right people are still leading, and that they are not dreaming too small."

Granite Acquires Provo-based Kenny Seng Construction

Watsonville, Calif.-based Granite Construction recently completed its acquisition of Provo-based Kenny Seng Construction (KSC), expanding the company's vertically integrated construction and construction materials platform in Utah and strengthening its presence in one of the nation's fastest-growing infrastructure markets.

The acquisition enhances Granite's capabilities throughout the Wasatch Front by adding comprehensive heavy/civil construction services for the firm's North Salt Lake office, including earthwork and site preparation, concrete construction, underground utility installation, project management, aggregate production, materials processing, and transportation services.

> "KSC is a great company. I know the acquisition is a great fit culture-wise and will support our goals in the state."
>
> —Jason Klaumann

Kenny Seng Construction built a strong reputation serving Utah's education, transportation, civil infrastructure, and private development markets. The addition also expands Granite's construction materials business through ownership of a hard rock quarry producing approximately 1 million tons of aggregate annually, along with approximately 45 million tons of aggregate reserves and measured and inferred resources. Granite said the acquisition also presents future growth opportunities, including development of a potential sand and gravel operation.

"KSC is a great company," said Jason Klaumann, Granite's Utah Region Vice President. "The leadership team is experienced, and the company serves some interesting markets, especially the educational infrastructure space, that are»

distinct from what Granite has historically offered in Utah. I know the acquisition is a great fit culture-wise and will support our goals in the state."

"Their end-to-end service capabilities, strong position in education and civil infrastructure, and established materials platform align well with our focus on building durable, resilient businesses that create long-term value for our shareholders," added Kyle Larkin, Granite President/CEO.

KSC generates approximately $150 million in annual revenues and is expected to deliver an adjusted EBITDA margin in the high teens.

The acquisition further expands Granite's investment in Utah, where the company has been involved in several major transportation and infrastructure projects, including the ongoing I-215 West: Wasatch Revamp for the Utah Department of Transportation.

FFKR Strengthens Regional Presence with Acquisition of Boise-based erstad

Salt Lake-based FFKR Architects and Boise-based erstad Architecture & Interior Design in June announced a strategic merger that brings together two respected design firms to expand architectural, planning and interior design services throughout the Intermountain West.

The merger strengthens FFKR's regional footprint while expanding its presence in Idaho's rapidly growing Treasure Valley. Combined, the firms offer clients broader expertise across civic, higher education, healthcare, science and technology, commercial, multifamily, hospitality and religious markets, while preserving the local leadership and relationships that have defined each practice.

Founded in 1998, erstad has earned a reputation as one of Idaho's premier architecture and interior design firms, completing numerous landmark projects throughout the state. Its portfolio includes educational facilities, civic buildings, commercial developments, multifamily housing, and community-focused projects that have helped shape the Boise metropolitan area for nearly three decades.

Salt Lake City-headquartered FFKR, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, is one of the largest and most respected architecture firms in the Mountain West. The firm maintains offices in Salt Lake City, St. George, Tempe and Boise, providing architecture, planning, landscape architecture and interior design services throughout the western United States.

"Our firms share a common belief that great design begins with strong relationships," said Michael Leishman, President of FFKR. "By bringing our teams together, we are expanding opportunities for our employees, strengthening the services we provide our clients and ››

positioning ourselves to pursue increasingly complex projects throughout the region."

The firms said the merger is driven by a shared culture of collaboration, design excellence and community engagement rather than consolidation for its own sake. Together, the combined practice will be able to deliver a broader range of multidisciplinary services while maintaining the personalized approach that has been central to both organizations.

"This partnership allows us to preserve everything our clients value about erstad while giving them access to a much deeper bench of expertise and resources," said Andy Erstad, founder of erstad and now a Senior Principal and Vice President with FFKR. "Our teams share remarkably similar values, making this a natural fit for our employees, our clients and the communities we serve."

> "This partnership allows us to preserve everything our clients value about erstad while giving them access to a much deeper bench of expertise and resources."
>
> —Andy Erstad

As part of the merger, erstad's Boise office will continue operating with its existing leadership team. Andy Erstad and Katrina Kulm will assume expanded leadership roles within FFKR, with Kulm joining the firm's Executive Committee. Both will become owners of the combined practice.

The firms emphasized that clients can expect continuity throughout the transition. Existing project teams will remain in place, and the Boise office will continue serving clients under the erstad name during an initial transition period before ultimately adopting the FFKR brand.

The merger creates one of the largest multidisciplinary design practices headquartered in the Intermountain West, enhancing the firm's ability to pursue larger and more complex commissions while expanding its reach throughout Utah, Idaho, Arizona, and neighboring states.

Eagle Mountain to Get Another Data Center Via $5.34 Billion Deal Between Blackstone and Williams

Williams announced a $5.34 billion strategic investment in July led by funds managed by Blackstone Credit & Insurance, in partnership with Apollo and insurance vehicles and accounts managed by institutional investment firm KKR. The investment accelerates the development of five large-scale, behind-the-meter power generation projects designed to serve the rapidly expanding data center market.

The investment provides Blackstone and its partners with a 49% non-controlling equity interest in Williams' initial Power Innovation portfolio, while Williams retains a 51% ownership interest along with commercial and operational control of the projects. The portfolio includes four projects in Ohio and Project Aquila in Eagle Mountain. Together, the five developments represent 2.6 gigawatts of generating capacity dedicated to powering hyperscale data center campuses.

Project Aquila is being developed adjacent to Meta's expanding data center campus and is designed to provide dedicated, behind-the-meter, natural gas-generated electricity directly to the facility rather than supplying the public electric grid. The project also includes new natural gas pipeline infrastructure and is expected to play a significant role in supporting Utah's rapidly growing artificial intelligence and cloud computing infrastructure.

The Eagle Mountain project underscores Utah's emergence as one of the nation's fastest-growing hubs for digital infrastructure investment. Coupled with major hyperscale developments by Meta and QTS Data Centers, Project Aquila represents another significant investment in the infrastructure needed to support the next generation of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and data storage.

"The investment from Blackstone [...] underscores the quality and importance of our turnkey energy infrastructure platform in serving rapidly growing power demand," said Chad Zamarin, President/CEO of Williams. "With more than 2.6 gigawatts announced, our Power Innovation portfolio is scaling rapidly, and we look forward to delivering these critical energy solutions for American companies."

"Williams is a leader in meeting the country's rapidly growing power demands, including providing critical hard assets to serve the AI infrastructure buildout," said Robert Horn, Global Head of Infrastructure & Asset-Based Credit at Blackstone, and Rick Campbell, Senior Managing Director, Blackstone Credit & Insurance, in a joint statement. "This is an area where we share deep conviction and expertise, and we're proud to support Williams with a scaled, high-grade capital solution fit for these innovative projects." ■

Turning Market Intelligence into Better Project Decisions

By Eric Larsen & Mary DeMann

Every A/E/C firm collects information. They learn about clients, competitors, upcoming projects, and market trends. Far fewer firms have a reliable process for turning that information into decisions. The gap between the two is often the difference between a firm that reacts to the market and one that anticipates it.

> When a firm is well-managed on the business development side, it shows up in ways owners and project teams actually feel.

This matters beyond the marketing department. When a firm is well-managed on the business development side, it shows up in ways owners and project teams actually feel. Proposals are sharper and better targeted; teaming decisions are made earlier and with more confidence; and client relationships feel proactive rather than transactional. It's worth understanding what separates firms that do this well from firms that don't.

Reliable sources are better than more sources. It's tempting to think the answer to better decisions is more data. In practice, the firms that make the best calls tend to have fewer, more trusted sources of market intelligence rather than a flood of information nobody has time to vet. Trusted sources could include a consistent set of industry publications, direct relationships with owners and economic development contacts, or a standing practice of debriefing after every pursuit, win or lose. The value comes from consistency and reliability, not volume.

Information has to go somewhere. Market insight that lives in one person's head or inbox limits how much it can help the firm. The firms that perform best tend to have some system, however informal, for capturing what they learn and making it accessible: a shared file on a recurring client's priorities; notes from a debrief that actually get read before the next pursuit; a simple habit of updating the team when something changes in a client's plans. This requires discipline, not expensive software.

Forecasting beats reacting. Firms that track trends, upcoming public funding cycles, or shifts in a client sector's priorities are the ones that show up to a pursuit already informed instead of scrambling to get up to speed. That head start is often what separates a winning proposal from one that gets lost in the crowd.

The real test is whether it changes a decision. Research and market intelligence are only useful when it can help influence decisions: a pursuit the firm chose not to chase; a client relationship that got extra attention because of a signal in the market; and a proposal strategy that shifted based on what a debrief revealed. If information isn't changing decisions, it's just taking up digital space.

The cost of getting this wrong is real, even if it's rarely visible. Firms without an organized business development process don't usually fail outright; they quietly underperform. Proposals get built on assumptions or information that was true but has changed over time. A competitor who caught wind of a personnel change, a scope adjustment, or an unexpected issue before it became common knowledge can present a stronger, earlier pitch. A long-standing client relationship goes cold because no one noticed a shift in priorities until it showed up in a lost project. None of these appear as a single dramatic failure; they add up over time into a firm that's consistently a step behind and could be the difference between losing ground and growing your firm.

Getting started doesn't require a major investment. Firms looking to close this gap don't need new software or a dedicated hire to see results. A short debrief after every pursuit—win or lose—captures lessons while they're still fresh. Designating one person to own a simple, shared record of client priorities keeps institutional knowledge from walking out the door when someone leaves. Narrowing down to a handful of trusted, regularly reviewed sources beats trying to monitor everything. Small, consistent habits like these are often what separates firms that anticipate the market from those that are always catching up.

For firm leaders, the practical question worth asking is whether your business development and marketing functions have this kind of process in place, or whether good information is being gathered and then quietly lost. It's a gap that's easy to overlook and relatively inexpensive to fix. ■

This article was contributed by Eric Larsen, President, and Mary DeMann, President-Elect of SMPS Utah, the local chapter of the Society for Marketing Professional Services. SMPS supports business development and marketing professionals across Utah's architecture, engineering, and construction industry.

AI for Construction Leaders: Where to Start and Who to Trust

By Sean Wright

If you own or lead a construction company, you may feel as though artificial intelligence appeared overnight.

Software vendors are adding "AI" to their products. Employees are experimenting with tools on their own. Competitors are talking about automation. Consultants are warning that companies must act quickly or risk being left behind.

It is reasonable to wonder what is real, what is hype, and what your company should do next.

You do not need to become a technology expert. You do not need to buy a major new system. You do not need to give an AI tool control over important business decisions.

But you do need to understand where your company may already be using AI, establish a few basic rules, and identify one area where the technology could save time without creating unnecessary risk.

Begin With a Business Problem—Not a Sales Pitch

The safest place to start is not with an AI vendor. Start with a recurring frustration inside your business and ask your leadership team:

- Where are our best people spending time on repetitive administrative work?
- Where are project managers rewriting the same reports or emails?
- Where is important knowledge trapped in the head of one estimator, superintendent, or operations leader?
- Where do incomplete notes, poor handoffs, or hard-to-find information slow a project down?

These questions are easier to answer than, "How should we use AI?"

> The AI marketplace is moving quickly, and not every adviser or vendor will understand construction. Be cautious when someone begins with a product demonstration instead of asking about your business.

They also protect you from buying technology before you know what problem it is supposed to solve.

For example, your first opportunity might be helping a project manager turn meeting notes into a draft action list. It might be organizing field notes into a weekly report. It might be creating a first draft of a routine customer communication.

In each case, an employee reviews the work before it is used.

AI prepares. Your people decide.

Put Basic Rules in Place Now

Even when a company has not formally adopted AI, employees may already be using it.

That makes a simple company policy an important early step.

Employees should know:

- Which AI tools are approved;
- What uses are those tools approved for and what uses are prohibited or require approval;
- What information—company, customer, employee, financial, and/or project—must not be entered into public tools;
- AI-generated material must be reviewed before it is sent, published, or used to make a decision;
- Employees—not the technology—remain responsible for the final work.

These rules do not require a fifty-page policy. A short, clear standard is better than silence.

Build Trust; Don't Assume It or Give It Away

The AI marketplace is moving quickly, and not every adviser or vendor will understand construction. Be cautious when someone begins with a product demonstration instead of asking about your business.

A trustworthy adviser should ask:

- What work are you trying to improve?
- Who performs that work today?
- What information is involved?
- What could go wrong if the output is inaccurate?
- Who will review the result?
- How will you determine whether the investment worked?

Be skeptical of anyone promising that AI will quickly replace experienced employees, eliminate the need for review, or solve a poorly defined process.

You should also be cautious when a vendor cannot clearly explain:

- How your information is stored and protected.
- Whether your data is used to train its systems.
- What happens when the system produces an incorrect answer.
- How employees will be trained.
- How the company can exit the system or retrieve its information.
- What measurable business result the tool is expected to improve.

A good partner will help you make a careful decision. A poor one will try to create urgency before creating clarity.

Choose One Low-Risk Starting Point

Your first AI project should be small enough to supervise and useful enough for employees to notice. Focus on building trust with employees while building trust with the AI tools.

Good starting points often involve drafting, organizing, summarizing, or finding information.

Avoid beginning with work involving safety decisions, contract interpretation, employee discipline, legal conclusions, financial authorization, or commitments to owners and subcontractors. Those areas require experienced human judgment and, in many cases, professional or legal review.

Run the first test for a limited period, compare the old process with the new one, measure time saved, quality, errors, employee experience, and management review, then make a deliberate decision to continue, improve, expand, or stop.

Leadership Still Matters Most

AI does not remove the need for experienced construction leadership. It increases the value of leaders who understand how work gets done, where risk lives, and which decisions must remain with qualified people.

> AI does not remove the need for experienced construction leadership. It increases the value of leaders who understand how work gets done, where risk lives, and which decisions must remain with qualified people.

The construction companies that benefit most will not be the companies that chase every new tool. They will be the companies that move carefully, establish clear rules, solve real operating problems, and keep human responsibility visible.

You do not need to have the entire AI journey mapped out today. Start by learning where it is already being used in your organization. Protect your company's information. Choose one practical problem and have an experienced person responsible for the result. Measure whether the work actually improves.

That is a sensible first step for most construction companies; it is enough to begin. ■

Sean Wright is a representative for Los Angeles-based LyffeLab, a company providing complex AI solutions for the A/E/C industry. Wright has more than 25 years combined experience as a high-level executive working in Utah's A/E/C industry and is currently consulting firms working in commercial design and construction. He can be reached at 801.450.8704 and sean.wright@lyffe.com.

New Midvalley Express BRT line showcases the impressive collaboration required to deliver 25 stations and further connect the mid-valley to an expanding public transit network.

By Taylor Larsen

If we're talking inflation, 1.5% sounds ideal.

But a 1.5% increase in bus ridership for Utah Transit Authority (UTA)? Not quite as sexy… until you consider UTA reported 31,000 more bus boardings in 2025 than it did in 2024—a total of 20.6 million bus boardings in 2025—passing the bumps from COVID and returning bus ridership to pre-pandemic levels.

Work on the MVX began long before general contractors from Stacy Witbeck's Salt Lake office and trade partners began construction efforts in 2024. The project began in earnest in 2008, identifying the SR-266 corridor as a strong candidate for transit investment.

According to UTA representative Gavin Gustafson, Sr. Public Information Officer, the time invested in refining the service from 2008 onward proved to be a major project strength.

"Over multiple planning efforts, partners reached consensus on a route that connects major existing transit centers while adding a new transit hub at Salt Lake Community College's Redwood Campus," he said. "Dedicated bus lanes along [SR-266] were also identified as a critical investment to improve travel time reliability and make the service easy for riders to recognize and access."

Studies completed in 2013 and 2015 helped refine the route and service plan, dictating the level of investment required to serve not just the communities of Murray, Taylorsville, and West Valley who joined the project in 2018, but the thousands who would use the new mid-valley transit infrastructure in the future.

Gustafson said city officials from Taylorsville were exemplary in their efforts to champion the project, beginning in 2019. "The city completed the state environmental review, advanced the project to 60% design, and secured significant funding commitments, positioning MVX for the next phase of development," he said.

Taylorsville Mayor Kristie Overson credited previous city administrations for the foresight to continue to champion an east-west transit line through the city. "They had vision of what we could do," she said of Taylorsville's efforts to be a connector—not just for personal vehicles. "But we knew there was no way to see this through as just a Taylorsville project."

Collaboration extended across borders and organizations; West Valley City contributed property at its City Hall campus to enable the expansion of the West Valley Intermodal Hub and improve ridership connections; Murray City provided critical environmental inspection and construction oversight at Murray Central Station, where work required specialized safety protocols because of the site's underground soil

Doug Stremel, Sr. Project Manager with Jacobs, said extensive design work went into roadway geometry to ensure buses could navigate crossovers, like those pictured in the foreground, as they enter the boarding platforms in the background. (photo courtesy UTA)

conditions and its operating status as a multi-modal hub for buses, light rail, and commuter rail. Salt Lake County, Wasatch Front Regional Council, UDOT, and federal and state representatives were integral in planning and securing funding for the new public transit asset.

Engineers at Jacobs, from the firm's Holladay office, were brought on as the prime consultant in 2021 to advance the design and develop bid documents. Doug Stremel, Sr. Project Manager with Jacobs, said design challenges included a short shutdown window for the North Jordan Canal concrete box extension and numerous utility relocations—waterlines, sanitary sewer, and fiber optics along SR-266. As design progressed, UDOT requested upgrades to certain communications lines and an additional fiber optic extension incorporated further east of the project.

UTA resumed project leadership in 2020 to pursue federal funding and finalize project development, completing the federal environmental review process in 2022 and design in 2023; Stacy Witbeck came aboard as the general contractor in late 2023. All the while, UTA prepared a grant application that eventually became $62.8 million awarded to UTA in 2024 from the Federal Transit Administration to help fund the $109.6 million project.

Simple Build; Complex Scheduling and Coordination

Interfacing with a college, state Interfacing with a college, state transportation agency, three cities, three water departments, and two power departments could have easily been a case of "too many cooks in the kitchen" once planning turned to construction, but Stacy Witbeck representatives said that close coordination with all stakeholders ensured that construction met each and every directive for a successful project.

For Mitch Schwab, Field Engineer with Stacy Witbeck, scheduling infrastructure projects across such a complex and extensive stakeholder network usually means fighting the uphill battle to meet deadlines.

Not here.

"I watched us move eight months ahead of schedule—a position that came with a kind of pressure nobody warns you about," he said.

While an early FTA funding delay pushed the schedule back, Schwab said the Stacy Witbeck team effectively used the downtime to order materials and secure submittal approvals long before they were needed. Bi-weekly stakeholder meetings and weekly schedule syncs kept things humming, and builders rode an unseasonably warm and relatively snow-free winter to move ahead of schedule.

"Every one of those wins compounded," he said. "Before we knew it, we had pushed the project eight months ahead of plan."

The firm and its trade partners had to keep their eyes on the prize to ensure to stay ahead of construction's constantly-arriving unknowns and hiccups, like ensuring that the North Jordan Canal culvert could be replaced within the canal company's two-week maintenance window. The construction team performed culvert removal, grading, rebar placement, formwork, concrete placement, and backfill successfully during the shutdown period, allowing services to resume in April 2025.

Schwab said performing regular schedule syncs, trusting in dedicated crews to deliver their respective scopes, and shifting coordination to match the new schedule helped MVX reach the finish line in April 2026, where crews had installed 20,000 tons of asphalt paving, 1 mile of drainage pipe, 64 precast columns, 4 miles of curb››

and gutter, 3,000 SF of colored decorative concrete flatwork, and much more—all before the expected Fall 2026 completion date.

A True Mid-Valley Route

As the third of UTA's BRT lines in operation, Gustafson noted that MVX design incorporated lessons learned from Utah Valley Express and Ogden Express BRT lines by prioritizing connection to a college campus as a ridership anchor.

Beyond the campus connection, the mid-valley route incorporates the same red paint marking the dedicated bus lanes; MVX contains 1.4 miles of these lanes across its 7-mile route, all engineered to allow buses to efficiently enter and exit the three center loading platforms along SR-266 from East Atherton Drive to Redwood Road in Taylorsville.

Stremel said extensive design work went into these platform layouts and the roadway geometry to ensure buses could navigate crossovers before and after the platforms on SR-266, where barrier openings with end treatments for smooth and safe bus operations.. These upgrades, as well as the transit signal priority added to all signalized intersections, keeps transit delays to a minimum while MVX's 10 electric buses pass along 15-minute intervals across the route's 25 stops.

Stremel said the plans and specifications to build up these platform shelters and additional supporting infrastructure were substantial. "These are hefty shelters built in place to endure time," he said, noting the extensive concrete, rebar and steel required for these platforms.

Even as absolute units, Stremel said design included bollards placed outside the bus lane engineered to "stop a veering Mack truck" and ensure life safety for the passengers waiting at the stops while keeping the platform structure safe.

The median stations may receive the lion's share of attention, but smaller stops along the route weren't an afterthought. Many newly created stops contain custom glass panel artwork developed in collaboration between UTA, the trifecta of municipalities, and SLCC. Each of the glass art pieces—designed by a cadre of 14 local artists—was inspired by the people, culture, and natural landscapes of the area; transit improvements colored by community character.

The route begins at newly installed high-efficiency bus charging stations installed at Murray Central (westbound) and West Valley Central (eastbound) and passes SLCC's Redwood Campus, the expanding State of Utah office campus on 2700 West, Valley Fair Mall, and other destinations, connecting riders to all three TRAX light rail lines and FrontRunner commuter rail for transit access to the entire Wasatch Front "This BRT line is an amazing amenity for our community," Mayor Overson said of the completed project. "MVX is not just an outlier BRT—this is a connector."

MVX will be fare-free for the first three years of operation for new riders to give public transit the ol' college try. There, riders can experience the power of collaboration and stakeholder engagement in bringing about a welcome new ride. ■

All-electric buses pass between West Valley, Taylorsville, and Murray along the seven-mile route, with dedicated bus lanes and median boarding platforms along SR-266. Many of the route's 25 stops include glass panel artwork developed in collaboration with project stakeholders and 14 local artists. (bottom photo courtesy Stacy Witbeck; top four photos courtesy UTA)

Midvalley Express - Route 50X
Location: Murray, Taylorsville, West Valley City
Design Start/Completion: October 2021/October 2023
Construction Start/Completion: March 2024/April 2026
Delivery Method: Best Value
Cost: $109 million

Project Team
Owner: Utah Transit Authority
Stakeholder Partners: Federal Transit Administration, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority Taylorsville City, West Valley City, Murray City, Salt Lake Community College, Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake County
Program Management Team: HNTB, Fehr & Peers, Kimley-Horn, RSG

Design Team
Prime Consultant: Jacobs
Geotechnical: Terracon
Environmental: Jacobs
Civil: Jacobs (main, east section), Avenue Consultants (west section)
Utilities: Jacobs (main, east section), Avenue Consultants (west section)
Survey/ROW: ESI Engineering
Subsurface Investigation: KCI
Construction Team
Prime Contractor: Stacy Witbeck
Excavation: Stacy Witbeck
Drainage: Stacy Witbeck
Utilities: Stacy Witbeck
Concrete: Stacy Witbeck
Bridges: Stacy Witbeck
MSE Walls: Stacy Witbeck
Electrical: Cache Valley Electric (signals, street lights, station electrical)
Station Canopies: GMAC Steel

Salt Lake Community College's Redwood Campus received its own bus depot, which helps deliver a ridership anchor to MVX. (left and right photos courtesy Stacy Witbeck)

FROM SEEDLING TO SAPLING TO CANOPY

Well over a decade since mass timber began gracing Utah's commercial projects, the question remains: what will it take for mass timber to become commonplace?

By Taylor Larsen

"Why aren't we doing this?" asked Rich Thomason.

The question came in the year 2000—11 years since Thomason started his own framing company, Ogden-based Timber Works. At that time, glued laminated timber (glulam) had been in use for well over a century while cross-laminated timber (CLT) was still in its infancy.

But in commercial construction? "Mass timber wasn't even in the vocabulary," said Thomason.

The mass timber production market, or what existed of it at the time, was warped like a wet 2x4—Thomason recalled that procuring timber elements was a headache, prices were exorbitant, and the service was poor. No surprise, the quality of these timber products followed suit.

But Thomason was certain the demand was there from what he saw in his early projects.

"There was framing involved," he said, "but there were these timber elements in the design to do the Park City style."

So he and the Timber Works team began adjusting processes to build up modeling and fabrication capabilities to integrate timber trusses and post and beam, helping to plant the seed for mass timber use in Utah.

Seedling to Sapling

If anyone knows the state of Utah's mass timber market, it's Thomason. He's seen the industry and owners gradually embrace the many benefits of mass timber—enhanced environmental stewardship, faster construction, increased occupant wellness—especially once mass timber sprouted up outside of the Wasatch Back, beginning with the bid to renovate Alpine's Star Mill in 2014.

"The bid requested post and beam construction and these weird things called CLT panels," Thomason said. He connected with SmartLam North America to win the project—Timber Works fabricated the post and beam; SmartLam sent over the CLT panels. "And with a little bit of coaching, we started installing the panels," Thomason added.

In the 12 years since, Timber Works has installed mass timber elements to numerous award-winning projects—Herriman State Liquor Store, Millcreek City Hall, Baltic Point, among others—as Utah's mass timber industry has grown from seedling to sapling.

Much like a forest, this portion of the industry is served by a healthy floor layer of timber suppliers—SmartLam (Montana), Kalesnikoff (Canada), Boise Cascade (Idaho)—and an emerging group of connection fabricators—Rothoblaas (Italy), Simpson Strong-Tie (California).

Mass timber's growth from seedling to sapling has been great for the building community, even as Thomason noted that Timber Works has competition to stay at the canopy layer. RedBuilt (Idaho), Timberlab (Oregon), and Western Wood Structures (Oregon) are three more within a cadre of mass timber specialists blown in via Utah's economic tailwinds, setting roots and delivering great mass timber work within the state.

Maturity

But the inverse of the initial question is worthwhile, too: why are we using mass timber?

On the construction side, Thomason said mass timber's prefabricated nature and straightforward assembly take what were once weeks-long floor assemblies utilizing steel and concrete and finishes installation within a week. It may share visual similarities with other wood products, but mass timber's 1.5 inch/hour char rating puts it in a class above.

The product's environmental qualities offer a unique selling point. Since trees take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and store it within their biomass in a process called carbon sequestration, studies comparing same-sized steel and concrete builds to mass timber show how mass timber construction significantly reduces construction phase emissions (69%) and overall global warming potential (26.5%) over the life cycle of the building. Mass timber products often derive from sustainably managed forests or from utilizing small-diameter trees cleared out for wildfire prevention; suddenly, mass timber is solving a lot of today's challenges.

If the best time to plant a tree is 10 years ago, the best time to sequester carbon within some glulam beams and CLT panels and use it in today's built environment is... also 10 years ago. The next best time for both is today—Thomason said the case in point for doing so in Utah comes every winter. "All you gotta do is wait for the inversion and see the stinky air we have on the Wasatch Front," he said.

The original question becomes more urgent: why aren't we doing this?

Headwinds

The learning curve is steep, according to KIER Construction Project Manager Will Nicholson. On his and KIER's first mass timber project—Timberwood Creek, a permanent supportive housing project in Layton for Davis Behavioral Health—the builders had to shift into a higher gear on structural coordination.

"With so many prefabricated components, small design changes can affect multiple trades, so communication and planning become even more important than on a conventional project," said Nicholson.

He noted that installation is impressively fast, but the product requires an intensive procurement process. Mass timber may be a lumber product, but it's not a widely available one; nearly all of it that arrives on Utah job sites comes from out of state or out of country.

Utah State University - Carolyn & Kem Gardner Learning & Leadership Building (photo by Kyle Aiken, courtesy MHTN Architects)

HB Workplaces, a tenant within Baltic Pointe. (courtesy HB Workplaces)

Coordination in design to ensure proper building system installation is even more intense. Penetrations into mass timber must be pre-planned and minimally invasive, and routing MEP in a place other than the ceiling creates conflicts with soundproofing.

ASSIST, the Salt Lake-based architects for Timberwood Creek, looked up an equally steep learning curve and sought out the experts to summit the challenge, according to Sam Ball, ASSIST's Community Design Director, enlisting SmartLam in a design-assist role and adding Thomason's team at Timber Works to the project as soon as possible. WoodWorks, the non-profit wood building design experts, proved to be another invaluable support throughout.

When Timberwood Creek finishes construction in the coming months, it will join rarified air. According to WoodWorks' Innovation Network database that tracks mass timber projects nationwide, there are less than 30 projects in Utah, either completed or under construction, that even utilize mass timber elements. Thomason said only Baltic Point is a fully mass timber project—where columns, beams, roofs, and floors are all made from mass timber elements. Everything else is a hybrid that utilizes mass timber elements with either structural steel, concrete, or traditional wood framing.

Mass timber's benefits as a natural, biophilic material are enticing, but it's an unconventional building style in Utah, "and anything unconventional drives costs," added Thomason, who simplified it further: "It's more expensive."

Of course it comes back to cost.

For commercial developers concerned about first costs and the bottom line, "Mass timber often can't compete in that regard," said Jordan Terry, SE, Principal for KPFF who leads the firm's Salt Lake office.

At the time of publication, KPFF colleagues Ashley Thompson, SE, and Emma Ellrich, PE, will have travelled to the Mass Timber Group Summit in Denver to present››

a framework, Terry said, that "fleshes out the advantages of one system versus the other, for any decision you would want to make."

"The framework is going beyond the bottom line," said Terry, "but that's still important for sure." It's not a trick to convince owners to utilize mass timber based on benefits alone, but a review of the different advantages provided by any system or product type to see if it aligns with an owner's overarching goals. When the price is revealed at the end, owners can answer the question: is the additional cost worth the advantages?

Having previously worked in the Pacific Northwest, Terry is particularly familiar with mass timber's advantages and its drawbacks. The heavily forested region creates a natural connection to mass timber product use—known as "forest to frame"—and is a major selling point for owners.

Idaho Central Credit Union Arena at the University of Idaho in Moscow is perhaps the grandest and best example of forest to frame. Most of the sourced wood came from the University's own 10,000-acre Experimental Forest and was milled and fabricated by Idaho firms, delivering a wholly unique sporting venue and mass timber masterpiece.

With less than 30 projects incorporating mass timber so far in Utah, Terry sees its distinctness as an untapped advantage within highly competitive commercial markets. Case in point: Baltic Point—in a slumping office sector, the Draper project reached 100% occupancy in less than two years.

Millcreek City Hall (courtesy Okland Construction)

New Growth

That differentiating quality applies to the similarly crowded multifamily market. While most owners of this building type are primarily focused on cost, Terry sees the product's potential in permanent supportive housing.

Timberwood Creek is Utah's seedling of a case study. Ball said the design ethos for ASSIST called for a dignified living environment that fosters mental health, supports recovery, and promotes the overall well-being of its future residents, saying: "A mass timber structure felt like a natural choice."

Designers proposed a hybrid mass timber structure—a concrete foundation system; a combination of three-ply and five-ply CLT floor plates and roof panels supported by 4"x18" glulam beams and 10"x 10" glulam columns; with structural steel and conventional wood framing—leveraging mass timber's advantages across significant areas of the building while staying true to the owner's budget.

Timberwood Creek is a hybrid mass timber project designed by ASSIST and currently under construction led by KIER Construction. Its mass timber elements—CLT floor plates supported by glulam beams and columns—will deliver a biophilic living environment for the Davis Behavioral Health clients who will soon call it home. (top photo courtesy KIER; rendering below courtesy ASSIST)

KIER's Nicholson said working through the early coordination challenge delivered a massive benefit to Timberwood Creek—utilizing CLT panels increased ceiling heights throughout the building.

Higher ceilings, combined with the larger structural spans facilitated by glulam columns and beams, delivered major trauma-informed design benefits by making "small living areas feel larger," according to Ball. "They also provide a sense of spatial openness or breathability that can help address the potential trauma experienced by the building's residents."

Mass timber also delivered a biophilic aesthetic that is continuous throughout the building. "This biophilic aesthetic innately connects residents to nature," Ball said, "and by doing so, has been proven to reduce stress, improve mental health, and overall well-being."

Timberwood Creek is near completion, and Nicholson has seen the long-term benefits of mass timber construction firsthand, saying: "The finished product is definitely a unique look that you don't get with conventional construction."

Canopy

More are seeing the vision that Thomason and Terry described.

Said Ball, "The use of hybrid mass timber construction types has greatly improved the viability of using mass timber on a variety of projects."

With more examples to come in offices, apartments, clinics, and other building types—and a greater pool of owners, architects, and contractors with the requisite knowledge and willingness to make it happen—the canopy will continue to grow.

Ball's quote about mass timber on Timberwood Creek as "a natural choice" is equally powerful when considering how mass timber can align with so many project goals: a choice that doesn't miss the forest for the trees.■

Since joining the firm in 1976, Rob Moore has been the driving force behind Big-D's ascension from a small, family-owned contractor to one of the biggest GC's in the nation.

Founded in Ogden in 1967, Big-D Construction has evolved from a small, family-owned general contractor into one of the nation's largest privately held commercial construction firms.

Today, Big-D boasts 19 offices—including its Salt Lake City headquarters — and nearly 3,000 employees nationwide, with annual revenues hitting a record-high $3.6 billion in 2025, good for No. 44 on the 2026 *Engineering News-Record* Top 400 Contractors list.

Big-D's portfolio within the Beehive State is highlighted by notable projects such as the $5.1 billion Salt Lake City International Airport Redevelopment, NSA Data Center, Natural History Museum of Utah, McKay-Dee Hospital, Scott M. Matheson Courthouse, and St. George City Hall.

The man at the center of the company's phenomenal growth the past half century is Rob Moore, who joined the company in his early 20's in 1976, quickly establishing himself as founder Dee "Big Dee" Livingood's right-hand man and a force to be reckoned with in Utah's commercial contracting sphere.

Moore has served in numerous leadership roles, including President from 1998-2018 and CEO from 2018-2022, before transitioning to his present role as Chairman of the Board in 2022. He's widely respected for his collaborative leadership style and customer-first philosophy.

UC+D's Brad Fullmer recently sat down with Moore to discuss his remarkable 50-year legacy.

UC+D: *Fifty years is an extraordinary amount of time at one company—congratulations on the milestone! What are some thoughts as you look back on your career and the things you've accomplished at Big-D the past half century?*

Moore: When you look back, 50 years is remarkable. Who knew we'd be in business this long or achieve what we've achieved? To be able to start with a company when there were just two of us, and then to look around today and see what we've built over five decades is pretty incredible. We're now one of the Top 40 contractors in the country by revenue; that's pretty cool to even say. But what means more to me is the people. When we first started, it was just Dee and me in the office. Dale Satterthwaite came in shortly afterward, and then Jack Livingood joined us a little later. To watch the progression of the company and see the talent we attracted as opportunities came along—that's what's rewarding.

Now, 50 years later, I look around and see 19 offices across the country. What's especially fulfilling is that those offices operate with the same core values we had when I joined in 1976.

UC+D: *How did you originally connect with Dee Livingood, and ultimately get hired at Big-D?*

Moore: I was working for a steel erection company in Salt Lake City, and we were subcontractors to Dee on manufacturing facilities. I started as a laborer in 1974; back then I was a long-haired kid with a really good tan because I was out in the field all the time. By 1975, we had been a subcontractor for Dee on several projects, and I was supervising small crews of five or six people. I was working in Logan on a recreation center, tripped and fell on some reinforcing mesh and re-broke a collarbone so I couldn't work in the field.

Dee approached me and asked if I'd be willing to make some cold calls for him. In January of 1976, Dee invited me to work for him full-time. Back then we were doing maybe a million dollars a year in revenue.

UC+D: *How did you try and differentiate Big-D from other general contractors?*

Moore: We started selling directly to owners. I'd sit down with them; sketch ideas on paper. If they liked it, we'd price it, explain how long it would take, and move forward. The interesting thing is that we weren't bidding projects; we weren't waiting for a complete set of drawings and then submitting a number. We were practicing design-build before anybody really used the term. We were selling pre-engineered metal buildings to manufacturers. I knew the product because I'd built it in the field. Owners need help—they don't always know how to get from an idea to a finished building. That customer-focused mindset became the root of our success.

UC+D: *What do you remember about that second decade, from the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s?*

Moore: We were growing to the point where we had to change how the company was organized. In the early days, I would find a customer, estimate the project, put together the proposal, negotiate the contract, and then help manage construction. Everybody was doing a little bit of everything. As we kept growing, we started to realize we needed a more organized structure. We used to call it a wagon wheel—we started identifying people's strengths and building out the spokes of the wheel. One of the toughest milestones was reaching $100 million in annual revenue. We were working incredibly hard just to take care of customers and maintain a profitable business.

UC+D: *In 1996, Big-D landed the contract for the Scott M. Matheson Courthouse complex. What do you remember about pursuing and ultimately winning that milestone project?*

Moore: That project was significant because it was the first true design-build project the State of Utah had ever undertaken. The project came under the leadership of Governor Mike Leavitt, and DFCM decided it wanted to solicit design-build proposals instead of using a traditional delivery method. For us, design-build was natural because we'd been doing it for years. We understood the process.

One of the biggest challenges was assembling the right team. When you're pursuing a courthouse project, you need architects who specialize in judicial facilities. There are so many unique requirements. You need to understand courtroom layouts, prisoner circulation systems, holding cells, security requirements, public access, judges' chambers, and all the operational components that people never see.

Today, we use sophisticated 3D technology for models, but back then architects built physical scale models—and the state required them for the courthouse. We partnered with HKS, one of the leading courthouse architects in the country, along with MHTN Architects as our local partner.

That pursuit was a major success for us because we had extensive design-build experience. There are certain projects that take a company to the next level—the Matheson Courthouse was definitely one of those projects for Big-D.

UC+D: *What other projects from that era stand out?*

Moore: The food and dairy projects we completed during those years were a huge part of our growth. Those projects kept us moving forward and gave us a strong foundation. Another project that stands out is McKay-Dee Hospital. The hospital was more than 1 million square feet and had to be completed before the 2002 Winter Olympics. That was a project that really elevated our company; one where you suddenly realize you're no longer building the small warehouses you used to sketch on a piece of paper.

UC+D: *What was the common thread behind those milestone projects?*

Moore: Confidence. Every major project gave us confidence to pursue the next one. You complete a project like the Matheson Courthouse, and you realize you can tackle more complicated work. Then you build McKay-Dee Hospital and realize you can handle large-scale healthcare projects. Each project expanded our capabilities and opened doors to new opportunities. At the same time, we never lost sight of what got us there in the first place: taking care of customers and helping them solve problems.

UC+D: *What was Dee's influence on you?*

Moore: Well, Dee was more than a mentor. He was kind of like a brother and a dad at the same time. There were only about 15 years between us, but he had a tremendous influence on me. He established the attitude that we were going to behave a certain way as a company. We were going to operate with integrity; we were going to live our core values. One thing Dee used to say was that you should never have to tell somebody you have integrity. Those values have stayed with us.

The other thing about Dee is that he was extremely competitive, and so was I. We used to have competitions to see who could bring in the most business. It was all friendly, but it pushed both of us. That competitive spirit helped us grow.

UC+D: *Who else had a major influence on your career?*

Moore: My wife, Christie. She is an educator, but she's also probably the smartest person I know. She taught me a lot about professionalism. She taught me etiquette. She taught me how to present myself in a professional environment. The whole "dress for success" philosophy came from her. She taught me how to communicate, how to conduct myself and how to embrace values that I probably wouldn't have without her influence.

UC+D: *When Dee got sick and ultimately passed away in 1995, that must have been a difficult period. What do you remember from that transition?*

Moore: It was a difficult time, but we were prepared. Several years before Dee passed away, he had become heavily involved in community leadership and deeply engaged in civic activities.

At one point, Dee basically said to Jack [Livingood] and me, "You guys have this."

That gave us the opportunity to begin taking on more responsibility. One of the decisions we made was opening a Salt Lake office. Dee wasn't necessarily interested in expanding south, but Jack and I saw the opportunity. By the time Dee passed away, the leadership transition had already begun.

Jack and I became especially close after Dee passed away in 1995. The remarkable thing is that we've never had a disagreement or an argument. That doesn't mean we haven't had difficult conversations, but we've never had a blowup or major conflict. Jack is very different than I am—I call him the architect of our company. He was more focused on vision and strategy.

I enjoyed operations more. I don't mind conflict. Somebody has to deal with problems, and I've always been comfortable doing that.»

UCD: Going back to the company itself, what was it like getting through the recession years around 2008 to 2010?

Moore: 2010 was tough; it was tough for everybody. That's probably the only year where we really took a significant hit financially. We knew the economy would eventually come back, and we knew we'd need our people when it did. So, we made a conscious decision to keep our key employees—estimators, business development, superintendents, project managers. Even if it cost us money in the short term, we felt it was the right decision. When the market came back, we still had the talent—our growth coming out of the recession was tremendous. Retaining our people was one of the smartest decisions we made.

UCD: You were on the cover of Utah Construction + Design over 10 years ago—February 2016 to be exact—in conjunction with receiving the Eric W. Ryberg Award from the Associated General Contractors of Utah. What did that award mean to you at that time?

Moore: That's when you've been in the industry a really long time and people start thinking, "Let's give Rob an award because you never know." It was a very nice acknowledgment—sort of a lifetime achievement award from AGC. It's gratifying because it means you've spent a lot of time in the industry and helped build something that's been fun to watch grow.

UCD: You've got two sons, Cory and Braden, who have risen to significant leadership positions within the company. Did you always assume they would eventually join the business?

Moore: No, not at all. They both started in the field. Cory started around 1995 as a laborer on the Egyptian Theatre renovation and the Convention Center project in Ogden. I told his foreman and superintendent, "Work him harder than anybody else. If he slacks off, fire him."

Braden came along a few years later and started the same way. He worked in concrete construction with one of our top superintendents. They're both very good with people—they can walk into a room and talk to anybody.

Over time they became two of our strongest business development leaders. Braden recently negotiated one of the largest projects we've ever secured without competition. That was bittersweet because, frankly, nobody had ever outsold me before!

Since Cory became CEO (in 2022), we've continued to grow dramatically. Our revenue has gone from $1.3 billion to $3.6 billion. But neither Cory nor Braden was handed anything. They earned their opportunities. If people don't earn their positions, nobody respects them—that's always been our philosophy.

UCD: When did Big-D make the strategic decision to begin expanding geographically and establishing offices outside Utah?

Moore: It started between 2010 to 2015. We decided we wanted to grow through acquisitions and geographic expansion. One of our first efforts was in Pleasanton, California. The leaders there had previously worked for Big-D, then spent some time elsewhere before coming back and saying, "We think we can build a successful operation in Northern California."

We had a similar situation in Minneapolis, with former Big-D people saying they wanted to establish a local operation. Some efforts worked better than others. Each acquisition raised the bar and helped take the company to another level.

UCD: What's your work schedule like these days? Most people would have retired long ago. What keeps you coming into the office?

Moore: Purpose. I also bought a ranch in Oakley, so as you start easing back from the business, you've got to have something else to do.

One thing I had to do intentionally was stop coming into the office and stop participating in all the leadership meetings. That's not easy when you've spent your life building something.

Today, Jack and I both serve as Co-Chairs of the Board. We're involved in the big-picture direction of the company, but we're not involved in the day-to-day operations.

Sometimes Cory or Braden will ask for advice. Sometimes other leaders will want to talk through an issue. But often they'll start the conversation by saying, "I don't want you to fix this. I just want to talk it through." And those conversations happen less and less because the leadership team is doing such a good job.

UCD: Looking ahead, where do you see Big-D going from here?

Moore: We're on quite a run right now. The talent we have today is better than it was 10 years ago; the leadership depth throughout this company is incredible. I think we have the potential to become one of the top contractors in the country. Could we become a Top 20 contractor? Absolutely. Could we become a Top 10 contractor? Maybe.

A lot of that depends on continuing to attract and retain great people. Cory talks about that every day—growth, leadership, having the right players on the field, and making sure we've got the right people in the right positions.

When I look around, it's amazing how many people have spent their careers at Big-D. We've built a place where people want to stay—that says a lot. But when someone leaves, we need to have someone ready to step into his role. We're constantly asking ourselves: Who's next? Who's ready? Who has the potential to lead? That's how you build a company that lasts. That's how you make sure the next 50 years are as successful as the first 50. ■

Moore shows how he used to sketch out projects when initially meeting with prospective clients.

Val Palmer and Harold Christiansen stand outside their first office in Salt Lake in the 1940s (left); Local No. 3 union plumbers from the 1940s. (all photos courtesy Palmer-Christiansen)

Palmer-Christiansen marks 80 years of mechanical excellence.

By Bradley Fullmer

Construction companies are accustomed to measuring success by the next project, the next bid, or the next deadline. Few have the luxury—or perspective—to look back across eight decades of work. Fewer still can trace that history through four generations of the same family.

When Harold Christiansen and Val Palmer founded Palmer-Christiansen Company in Salt Lake City in 1946, they couldn't have imagined the role their fledgling mechanical contracting firm would eventually play in shaping Utah's built environment. Over the next 80 years, the company would help construct many of the state's most recognizable hospitals, hotels, research facilities, universities, semiconductor plants, and sports venues. Along the way, it would quietly earn a reputation as one of Utah's premier mechanical contractors—not by becoming the largest, but by becoming one of the most trusted.

That distinction wasn't accidental.

From its earliest days, Palmer-Christiansen embraced a philosophy that has remained remarkably consistent through four generations of family leadership: pursue quality over quantity, establish long-term relationships over volume, and prioritize technical excellence over low bids.

"We never wanted to be the biggest company," said Brett Christiansen, 61, current President and third-generation leader. "We just wanted to make money, do a good job for our customers, and have some fun."

"We are a small company that does large projects," added Harold W. 'Hal' Christiansen, 88, Brett's father who served as President from 1985-2010. "It was fun to build those buildings. I'm proud of the work we did."

It is a deceptively simple philosophy that has carried the company through recessions, changing markets, labor shortages, technological revolutions, and an industry that has seen many long-established contractors merge, consolidate, or disappear altogether.

Today, Palmer-Christiansen stands as one of Utah's few remaining fourth-generation, family-owned contractors.

Palmer-Christiansen's third- and fourth-generation leaders—Brett Christiansen (right) and his son, Simon—have the company well-positioned for continued success.

Built on Opportunity

While the company's roots stretch back to the year after World War II ended, Harold Christiansen understood hard work long before he understood business. After his father died, Harold left school at age 15 to help support his mother and younger siblings, eventually learning the plumbing trade during the 1930s.

He worked for Whitely Palmer, which was co-owned by Val Palmer, whose family had been involved in the industry since the late 19th century through the A.H. Palmer Company.

After World War II, Whitely retired and Harold proposed to Val the idea of going into business together, forming Palmer-Christiansen. Brett said his grandfather handled operations, with Palmer serving as the financial backer.

The young company found success in the K-12 market and other smaller commercial projects across the Wasatch Front. It wasn't glamorous work, but it built something more valuable than a project portfolio—it built trust with clients and a reputation as a contractor who did quality work.

That reputation became the foundation upon which future generations would expand the business. Harold's son, Hal, grew up around construction, spending his summers working alongside his father, starting with the company at age 14. After high school, Hal earned a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Utah in 1960. Hal entered the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps, serving three-and-a-half years on active duty before returning home.

He felt obligated to follow in his father's footsteps, and when offered a position in the company in 1964, he accepted.

"It was certainly his expectation and, at the time, it seemed like a good opportunity for me," said Hal. "It turned out well. I didn't have any brothers, so if I had not come on board, I don't think the company would have grown to where it is today. He was never interested in being a big company."

Hal's arrival marked the beginning of a pivotal chapter in the company's history.

Changing the Company's Trajectory

By the mid-1960s, Hal recognized that the market Palmer-Christiansen had relied upon for nearly two decades was changing. The K-12 market was becoming increasingly competitive, margins were tightening, and growth opportunities were shifting toward institutional and healthcare projects that required more sophisticated mechanical systems. Rather than continue to chase volume, the company made a strategic decision that would define its future.

"Working on schools became not as profitable," Hal recalled, "so we moved the company into more institutional work—higher education and healthcare. We've done a lot of healthcare. We did the LDS Hospital reconstruction in the early '80s. We worked at BYU during the '60s and '70s, and we've done a lot of work at the University of Utah."

That transition transformed Palmer-Christiansen into a highly specialized mechanical contractor capable of tackling large, sophisticated projects. It also established a business model that took the company from a small, school plumbing contractor into the large project contractor of today.

"Easy work is not profitable, especially when you're a union contractor," Hal added. "We perform good work, do it timely, and are a good team player. […] We've always had a good product. We're proud of the way we get things done."

Notable projects that gave the firm confidence and bolstered its reputation included several buildings at Brigham Young University, LDS Hospital in the early 1980s, the Cliff Lodge Expansion at Snowbird—both the original structure in 1974 and a major 13-story addition in the mid-'80s that tripled occupancy to 532 guest rooms—and Primary Children's Hospital at the University of Utah, a mammoth 600,000-SF building completed in 1990.

"The 1980s were really when we started making significant inroads into larger, more complicated projects," Brett said, adding that the 1990s were "more of a mixed bag" due to a fluctuating economy.

Third Generation Takes Over

Brett Christiansen didn't assume he would lead the family business someday. Like his father, he started in the shop as a teenager, threading sprinkler pipe during summer breaks along with other miscellaneous tasks.

After graduating from Cottonwood High in 1983, Brett earned a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from University of Southern California before landing a job with Chevron, where he worked for several years.

"I always knew my dad wanted me to come back, but honestly, I wanted to become CEO of a Fortune 500 company,"››

Second-generation leader Hal Christiansen took the firm to new heights during his tenure as President.

BioMed Polymers Building.

Huntsman Cancer Institute.

said Brett. “I thought I was going to become Chairman of Chevron.”

When the company asked him to relocate to the other side of the world—Papua New Guinea—he balked and instead pursued an MBA from Yale University. He then accepted a management consulting position with a Boston-based firm which paid what he thought was a great salary.

“When I told my grandfather what my salary in Boston was going to be, he laughed and said, ‘You can make that much by accident here’,” Brett recalled. “I had no idea how successful the business really was.”

So, he moved back to the Beehive State in 1991, which at the time was a sluggish economy. By 1998, things picked up substantially, with the company gaining stability and consistency as the state geared up to host the 2002 Winter Olympics.

“We were extremely busy during that period,” said Brett. Just as Hal had positioned the company in the late 20th century, Brett led Palmer-Christiansen into a new era in the 2000s, when mechanical projects became more technologically advanced.

Hospitals grew more sophisticated. Research laboratories demanded increasingly complex building systems. Semiconductor manufacturers required ultra-clean environments where precision was measured in fractions of an inch. Owners expected contractors to solve problems using BIM, prefabrication, and advanced coordination to eliminate conflicts before crews ever reached the jobsite.

Rather than view those changes as obstacles, Brett embraced them, with his engineering background paying huge dividends.

“Having an engineering degree helps tremendously because when I sit down with engineers to solve design problems, they know I’m not just a plumber,” he said. “I understand pump sizing, boiler sizing, heat exchangers, and everything else they’re working through. That has helped build strong relationships with engineering firms throughout my career.”

That approach has produced one of the state’s most impressive mechanical project portfolios.

Palmer-Christiansen has completed every BioFire Diagnostics facility, numerous research buildings at the University of Utah—including the Emma Eccles Jones Medical Research Building, Biomedical Polymers Building, L.S. Skaggs Pharmacy Research Building, and Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital—while continuing work on hospitals, higher education facilities, and advanced manufacturing projects throughout the state.

Its relationship with Utah’s semiconductor industry has been equally enduring. Palmer-Christiansen was among the original contractors working on Micron’s Lehi fabrication plant in 1995. Although the project was eventually mothballed, the company returned when construction resumed under IM Flash and has remained involved through its evolution into today’s Texas Instruments campus.

The company has thrived building complex mechanical systems including hospital and laboratory projects.

“It’s an entirely different world,” Brett said. “Our crews work in clean rooms wearing full bunny suits. They’re installing ultra-high-purity stainless steel systems, specialized plastics, and Teflon piping. There are literally hundreds of miles of piping. It’s fascinating work, but it’s also dangerous.”

That technical prowess has carried Palmer-Christiansen into projects as diverse as City Creek Center, the Frank E. Moss U.S. Courthouse, Delta Air Lines’ Flight Training Center, multiple phases of renovation at the Delta Center, and the Utah Jazz’s new practice facility.

One project, however, stands alone in Brett’s memory.

Grand America Hotel wasn’t simply another large mechanical contract. It was the project that cemented both the company’s reputation and Brett’s own confidence as a young executive. To this day, he recalls fond memories of working with the hotel’s legendary developer, Earl Holding.

“Mr. Holding was incredibly hands-on. A lot of people thought he was intimidating—and he certainly could be—but everything he did was because he wanted the project done the right way,” said Brett.

During the construction process, which ran from 1998-2001, Holding’s Project Manager was Neal Stowe, former long-time Director for the State of Utah’s Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM) from 1981 to 2007.

“Neal would call me on a Friday evening and say, ‘Mr. Holding wants to see you.’ I’d go to the project expecting a quick conversation, and we’d be there until 10:00 pm,” Brett recalled. “He wanted to understand every detail. He challenged everyone involved, but it wasn’t to make life difficult. He genuinely cared about building the finest hotel possible. As the project went on, we earned his trust.”

The project also reinforced a lesson that has guided Palmer-Christiansen for decades: difficult projects often become the most rewarding.

“To this day, it’s probably the most memorable project I’ve ever worked on,” said Brett. “Grand America was my coming-of-age project in this business. If you could survive Mr. Holding, you could survive just about anything.”

Another prominent relationship with a big-time local owner has been with the Utah Jazz organization, both when it was owned by Larry and Gail Miller and now under Ryan Smith and Smith Entertainment Group’s stewardship.

The company was the mechanical contractor on the new Utah Mammoth Practice Facility in Sandy that opened last year, while also working on the Delta Center through a couple of different renovations, including one in 2017 and the multi-year effort slated to finish next summer.

“The Delta Center has been a fascinating project,” said Brett. “It can be stressful because everything happens on an incredibly compressed schedule, but it’s also a lot of fun. We’ve gotten to know the facility inside and out, and our crews enjoy working there because they’ve built relationships with the people who operate the building. This current renovation is especially challenging. On the north end of Level 3, everything above is coming out—the concrete, the suites, the seating—everything. Then it all gets rebuilt in a very short window. We’ve been fortunate to continue working there through multiple renovation phases.”

Reputation Over Revenue

For many companies, success is measured in annual revenue or employee count.

Palmer-Christiansen has never viewed growth that way, with annual revenues hovering between $35 and $55 million the past 15 years.

“Our biggest year was in 2018 when we reached $55 million,” Brett said. “At that time, we had about 250 employees working 60-hour weeks during a major ramp-up at Texas Instruments. Normally we like to have around 100 to 125 employees, but we’re back around 90 employees and expect revenues in the $45 to $50 million range. We’ve never felt the need to chase growth for growth’s sake. Sometimes you can double your revenue and make less money. We’ve always believed in carefully selecting both the general contractor we work with and the owners we work with.”

That philosophy has fostered decades-long relationships with Utah’s top general contractors and mechanical engineering firms. It has also contributed to remarkably low employee turnover, particularly among field leadership.

“Our key field leaders average 15 to 20 years with the company,” Brett said. “The key is treating people with respect. You empower them to make decisions. You let them lead. The superintendent running a hospital project is responsible for that project. I’m there to solve problems when needed, but it’s his job to build it. When people feel ownership, they perform better.”

That culture traces directly back to Hal.

“We never had any conflicts,” Hal said of working alongside Brett. “I let him do what he wanted; he let me do what I wanted—we supported each other in everything.”

Likewise, Hal never pressured his own children to enter the family business.

“I wasn’t always keen about being expected to follow my father’s footsteps,” he said. “So, I tried to have my boys follow their own passions.”

His oldest son, Erik, became an attorney. His youngest, Kurt, is an airline pilot for JetBlue.

“Brett had more of a mentality for engineering,” Hal said. “I felt that one day he might want to come back to the business, and I’m glad he did.”

Brett praised Hal for his leadership and ability to find solutions to complex problems, saying: “My dad’s greatest strength was that he understood mechanical systems better than almost anyone. If something wasn’t working, he could diagnose the problem and figure out how to fix it. He was also a tremendous teacher. Honestly, he’s a better teacher than I am. I tend to think people should just go figure it out. He was much more patient.”

A Tradition of Leadership

Palmer-Christiansen’s influence extends well beyond the projects it has completed.

Three generations of the Christiansen family have served as President of the Utah Mechanical Contractors Association (UMCA)—an accomplishment few family businesses can claim.

Harold Christiansen led the organization from 1958-59 during the post-war construction boom. Hal followed four decades later, serving from 1999-2001. Brett became the third-generation family member named President, serving from 2013-2017 while also contributing nationally through the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCA).

Together, those leadership roles reflect more than longevity. They speak to the respect Palmer-Christiansen has earned among competitors, labor partners, and owners throughout Utah’s construction industry.

“Reaching 80 years in business is an extraordinary accomplishment, but what has always set Palmer-Christiansen apart is that they have never measured success solely by the projects they build,” said Bob Bergman, Executive Director for UMCA. “For three generations, the Christiansen family has invested countless hours serving UMCA, leading our Board of Directors, chairing committees, mentoring others, and helping shape the future of our industry. Harold, Hal, and Brett each left the Association stronger>>

The Delta Center ice hockey rink.

Biofire Research

Biofire Research

than they found it, and with Simon now joining the company, I believe that tradition of leadership will continue. Over my 33 years with UMCA, I have been fortunate to call the Christiansen family both trusted advisors and friends. Their legacy is measured not only in buildings across Utah, but in the lasting impact they have made on our industry and the people within it."

Carrying the Legacy Forward Into a Fourth Generation

Just as Harold invited Hal into the company, and like Hal opened the door for Brett, the transition to a fourth generation is underway.

Brett's son, Simon, is 25 and came on board full-time in 2018 after realizing college wasn't for him.

Like the generations before him, Simon started in the shop as a teenager a decade ago before completing the UMCA apprenticeship program and becoming a journeyman. He eventually ran projects in the field before learning estimating and project management.

"I went to college for about a year but never found anything that made me think, 'This is what I want to do'," he said. "I already enjoyed working here and had spent several summers with the company, so I entered the apprenticeship program, became a journeyman, ran my own projects—including Delta Air Lines' Flight Training Center—and eventually moved into the office. Working in the field first made a huge difference because you understand what the crews are dealing with every day."

For Brett, that experience isn't optional—understanding construction begins with understanding the people performing the work.

It is one more example of a company that has remained remarkably consistent, even as the industry around it has changed dramatically.

"Construction is only becoming more complex," said Brett. "I can see AI helping engineers generate designs or speeding up research. Years ago, at the national MCA board level, we talked about technology changing our business model."

He believes companies like Palmer-Christiansen, and all businesses that revolve around skills trades, will only become more important over time.

"AI is going to change everything, but someone still has to install that pipe, someone still has to set that chiller. I think skilled trades are going to remain incredibly valuable. That applies both to the general contractors we work for and the owners who ultimately occupy the buildings."

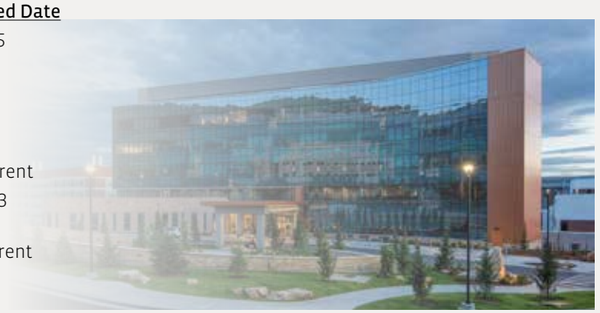
As the company celebrates 80 years, he's appreciative of Palmer-Christiansen's legacy and hopes to see the firm hit the century mark in two decades. By then, Simon will be in his mid-40s.

"80 years means a great deal to me—there aren't many fourth-generation companies, not just in Utah, but anywhere in the country," he said. "I'm proud that we've continued growing while maintaining the respect of general contractors and engineers. At the end of the day, it's all about our clients. If we're building a hospital, our goal is to help doctors provide better patient care. If we're building a manufacturing facility like BioFire, we're helping them produce products that improve healthcare. That is meaningful work. Even though we're not a service contractor, many clients call us years later because they trust us. If one of our longtime clients needs help with a small project, we're happy to go back. We believe in taking care of our customers. I hope we're still independent 20 years from now. I'd love to see this company celebrate its 100th anniversary." ■

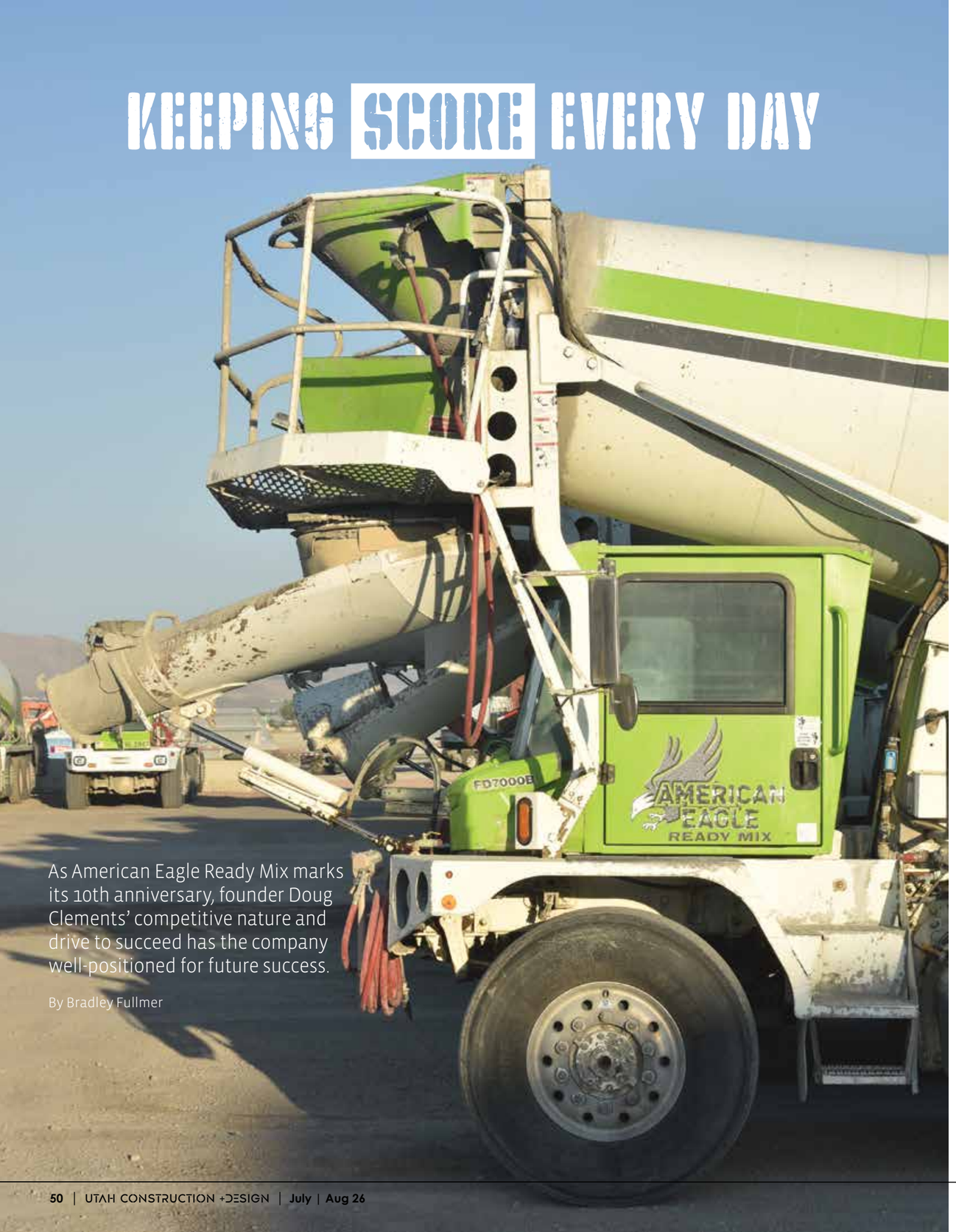
Palmer-Christiansen provided mechanical contracting on the bioMérieux Administration Building, and the Craig H. Neilsen Rehab Hospital (below). (photos by Paul Richer)

Palmer-Christiansen Top Projects

Project	Location	Completed Date
Cliff Lodge at Snowbird	Snowbird	1974; 1985
LDS Hospital Reconstruction	Salt Lake City	1980s
Eagle Gate Office Tower	Salt Lake City	1986
Primary Children's Med Center	Salt Lake City	1990
Grand America Hotel	Salt Lake City	2001
Texas Instruments Expansion	Lehi	2005; Current
BioFire Diagnostics	Salt Lake City	2014; 2023
Craig H. Neilsen Rehab Hospital	Salt Lake City	2020
Delta Center Renovation	Salt Lake City	2017; Current
Huntsman Cancer Phase IV	Salt Lake City	2023



KEEPING SCORE EVERY DAY



As American Eagle Ready Mix marks its 10th anniversary, founder Doug Clements' competitive nature and drive to succeed has the company well-positioned for future success.

By Bradley Fullmer

American Eagle Ready Mix executives at the company's American Fork ready-mix plant: (left to right) Tyler Thorn, VP–Ready Mix; Doug Clements–CEO; Tyler Clements–President; Mason Clements–Director of Recycling Operations; Colin Clements–Director of Operations and Logistics; Sarah Clements–Operational Strategy Analyst.

Doug Clements' strong personality and hyper-competitive nature have served him well during his 40-plus years working in Utah's construction industry. As his company—Draper-based American Eagle Ready Mix (AERM)—celebrates 10 years since its inception, Clements maintains a sharp focus on day-to-day results.

"We keep score every day," said Clements, 58, who learned how to work hard from an extraordinarily young age, and maintains a sharp intensity while building American Eagle into a prominent player in the concrete ready-mix market along the Wasatch Front. "Sometimes people mistake my intensity, but I'm just playing the game."

50 Years of Working Hard Began as a Young Boy

Clements grew up in Midvale and started earning money during summer breaks from school starting at age 8, earning $1 per hour working for a friend's dad who owned Blako Construction. He performed gopher-like chores like tying rebar, stocking materials, and assisting framers.

Growing up in a family of modest means, he said he consistently worked 40-hour weeks, which produced a welcome $40 paycheck, money he used to buy his own clothes and generally support himself in his youth. If he and his friend worked hard and performed well, the crew boss would reward the boys with donuts from the gut truck and lunch at Gene Fullmer's Celebrity Restaurant in Midvale, in addition to getting to ride motorcycles after work.

At age 14, Clements went to work for Martin Marietta, a Maryland-based company that built an $85 million cement plant in Leamington, Utah, in 1980-81, where his father was a salesman. Clements performed miscellaneous tasks at the company's Murray location during high school summers. After graduating from Taylorsville High in 1986, he played baseball at Utah Technical College, and then the University of Utah, where he suffered a season-ending broken leg each year blocking the plate.

Learning the Ropes of the Ready-Mix Industry

Clements landed a job at Geneva Rock Products at 19, working as a dispatcher initially, and then quality control. He learned the ins and outs of concrete mix design from John Young Sr., and at age 21 was promoted to serve as Geneva's on-site representative overseeing concrete placement on the Delta Center project, a rigorous 18-month schedule that proved invaluable to his career.

"I watched every yard of concrete poured at the Delta Center—it was great experience for a 21-year-old," said Clements. "I'd be there on a Sunday afternoon and Gail and Larry Miller would drive their Lexus down to the bottom floor after church and look at their building."

Over the next five years, Clements enhanced his knowledge of the industry via work opportunities outside of Utah, including managing WMK Materials' Bullhead City, Arizona, operations, which included a block plant, aggregate pit, and ready-mix operation before moving to Las Vegas in 1993. He then spent time in Atlanta on a job called 'Project Rocket', before returning to Utah in 1996 to work for Jack B. Parson Ready Mix, which had been recently purchased by Oldcastle, reporting directly to John Parson.

"I ended up being their Vice President," recalled Clements, playing a key role in the company's explosive growth in Salt Lake, Tooele, Wasatch, Summit and Utah County and seeing it expand from 15 ready-mix trucks in '97 to more than 250 trucks by 2001.

In 2007, Clements was lured away to work for Draper-based Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction and start its paving division.

"We bought a batch plant, purchased paving equipment, and I became involved with equipment, safety, risk management and paving operations," said Clements. "I eventually became General Manager and was in that role when the company was sold to Texas-based Sterling Construction."

He ultimately took a position as CEO of Texas Sterling Construction, which required constant travel from Utah to Texas over the next three years. Family reasons prompted Clements to move back to Las Vegas in 2013, where he served as a consultant, while also helping a friend, Gaylen Stockton, launch Western Pacific Precast, and then American Eagle Ready Mix. The light bulb clicked, and he realized it was time to spread his wings and start his own company.

"That's when I decided it was finally time to do it for myself," he said of starting American Eagle Ready Mix in Utah. "They're separate companies; I kept the same name because it made the startup easier."»

AERM's American Fork plant is one of its five permanent batch plants in Salt Lake and Utah counties, with a sixth plant coming online later this year.

Not Afraid to Compete Against the Big Boys

Clements officially started American Eagle Ready Mix in Utah in 2016, with modest goals initially of just establishing the company's name in the market and focusing on incremental, consistent progress. He bought a patch of land in Magna, a used batch plant, cobbled together a fleet of ready-mix trucks and got after it.

"We started in a sagebrush field in Magna," Clements recalled. "We bought 10 acres from Rio Tinto, purchased a used batch plant from Granite Construction in California, and bought used ready-mix trucks from (Geneva Rock) and Ernst Concrete in Ohio. I bought six trucks that were running and ten that weren't. We rebuilt six more using the engines, transmissions, axles and other components from the non-running trucks. Back then you could 'glider' trucks, putting the driveline onto a new frame with a new cab and barrel."

The company started batching concrete in August 2016, finishing the year with about 10,000 cu. yds. In year two, the company grew 500%, and it essentially doubled production every year through 2023.

Clements knew entering the Utah market wouldn't be easy, but he had a solid track record working for other companies and knew the effort required to be successful.

"I look at it like this: When I was with Oldcastle, for example, we started [small], and I helped build that company into a monster. I did it for them. I did it for RLW Construction. Finally, I decided it's time to do it for me and my family."

The first year was difficult. He faced long odds and some initial pushback from local cement producers who wouldn't sell him product until he proved he could survive. People within the ready-mix industry were also skeptical the venture would pan out, but he was unbowed having to go head-to-head with the huge ready-mix concrete producers in the market, confident his work ethic and industry savvy would ultimately pay dividends.

"We had to haul cement from Las Vegas the first six months," he said. "We trucked it in and then would pick up fly ash from Intermountain Power Plant on the return trip to Vegas. Every day we turned trailers. Whenever there was a wreck on I-15 or bad weather, there was definitely stress during that time."

"One of the biggest things I constantly heard during the first couple of years was, 'Doug won't make it two years," he continued. "I even had the president of one of [our competitors] tell me I'd never batch a yard of concrete out of American Fork. We started the American Fork plant—working with the city was challenging—but we got it done. The naysayers kept betting against me. We eventually earned our niche and were off to the races."

Clements said being a smaller company allows it to be more nimble and flexible in responding to customer needs, with supreme attention to detail at every level. "Our niche is being hands-on—internally, we can do it all," he said.

Joining Quanta Provides Long-Term Stability for Next Generation of Family

One of Clements' main joys is having his four children working with him at AERM.

Tyler, 35, is AERM's President and started working in the industry straight out of high school for Ralph L. Wadsworth Construction where he worked primarily in highway paving and portable ready-mix batch plant logistics.

Mason, 33, recently came back to the company full-time after a 13-year career as a leading contender in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) bareback rider ranks, qualifying for the National Rodeo Finals five times. He is spearheading the company's new crushing and recycling operations, which came online in June.

Colin, 28, is the Director of Operations and Logistics, having started at AERM during his final year in high school. He works in tandem with Jason Smith, AERM Operations Manager, overseeing batch plants, fleet management, and dispatch.

Sarah, 26, joined the company in January and serves as AERM's Operational Strategy Analyst. She earned a Bachelor of International Business from the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) and spent five years working in hotel operations and management in Sin City.

In 2021, AERM started providing ready-mix concrete on transmission line projects for Houston-based Quanta Services, a top national specialty infrastructure contractor which builds and maintains power grids, renewable energy systems, and pipelines.

By August 2022, the company convinced Clements to let it acquire AERM, a decision that allows the company to maintain its identity while providing greater working capital and long-term security.

"My dream for a long time has been to own my own business and work with my kids every day," he said. "Even though we're now part of Quanta, we keep our name, we keep our colors, we keep running our business the way we've always run it, and my kids still have the same opportunities they had before. It's been good."

His children said they relish the opportunity to work side-by-side their hard-driving father and genuinely are enjoying their roles within the company. They're all competitive by nature, having been raised playing sports, which carries over into the business aspect of AERM.

Tyler credits AERM's explosive growth to never being content with current success.

"The key to American Eagle's success really comes down to (our family's) drive to keep pushing the company to do more—to push the limits of what we're capable of doing," he said. "We keep the business growing, and as soon as we hit one milestone, we're already chasing the next one. We're not comfortable just sitting still. We live on the edge of being uncomfortable—I think that's one of the things that has allowed American Eagle to grow and succeed. We get bored when we're comfortable. We're always driving toward the next challenge and the next thing we haven't done before."

Mason officially retired from the PRCA this year and is tackling AERM's recycling operations with the same zeal he put into bareback riding.

"I've always had the idea of building our recycling operation, and I have the same goals and ambition that I had when I first started rodeoing," he said. "I don't start something and take it lightly—I want to do the job right and do it to a high standard. I have big goals and ambitions for the recycling division of American Eagle. We want to produce a quality product for our customers, support our concrete operations with quality materials, control the quality of everything we produce, and build something much bigger than anyone expects."

Colin said the family dynamic produces great synergy given they all have the same drive to succeed. Any disagreements at work quickly fade away once the dust settles.

"We grew up in a competitive family—we were always competing with each other," he said. "I think that competitive nature translates directly into business, just like it did in sports. It's that drive to win, and that's what we strive for every day. What makes working with family successful is we all have a passion for it. Sometimes it's difficult. There are days that are harder than others, but you have to remember it's business—it's not personal. A lot of emotion can come with it, but at the end of the day, we're still family, and that's what matters."

Sarah enjoyed her time in hospitality but felt at the end of last year it was time to join the family ranks.

"At the beginning of the year, everything just lined up," said Sarah. "American Eagle is celebrating its 10th anniversary, the company is growing rapidly, and it felt like the right time to make the move."

> "The key to American Eagle's success comes down to (our) drive [...] to push the limits of what we're capable of doing."
>
> —Tyler Clements

She continued, "We definitely grew up in a competitive family. All of us played sports, and my parents always pushed us to be the very best we could be. You didn't get to half-ass anything. That competitive mindset carries over into business. We're in a very competitive market, and everyone here works incredibly hard every day. It starts at the top. People see the work that Doug and Tyler have put in since the very beginning, and that's inspiring for the entire team."

Bright Future

Since being acquired by Quanta nearly four years ago, American Eagle has continued to thrive, with similar growth rates in 2023-25 as before being acquired.

The company operates five permanent batch plants throughout Salt Lake and Utah Counties, with a sixth plant coming online later this year. AERM also has eight portable batch plants, which allows it to work on Quanta projects in multiple states, including Texas, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, California and Idaho. The company has also greatly expanded its fleet capability, currently running nearly triple the number of ready-mix trucks.

Tyler Clements said the American Fork plant sits on ten acres, with another seven acres for the crushing/recycling operations and equipment storage. That plant was initially a temporary batch plant at Pelican Point, erected when AERM landed a contract to supply ready-mix for the I-15 Corridor Expansion from Thanksgiving Point to Lehi Main Street in Utah County from late 2017 into 2019.

"When we landed that project, in all reality we probably had no business doing it," he said. "But I had the experience and confidence to do it, Doug had the experience, and again, we get bored very quickly just being comfortable. We like to live on the edge."

Doug Clements admits that he's having as much fun as he's ever had and is excited to keep pushing the envelope on reaching greater goals.

"The ready-mix business is different than construction. For me, it's like playing a game every day," he said. "Every day is different, and I get an adrenaline rush putting together all the pieces of a day's production—getting all the trucks where they need to be, making sure the quality tests are done and everything is running smoothly. It's like a ballgame to me."

"Doug is an extraordinary leader because he combines a relentless winner's mentality with genuine humility," said Tyler Thorn, Vice President of Ready Mix, who joined AERM in August 2024 after working 11 years at a rival company. "He takes complete ownership of his commitments, cares deeply about people, and never seeks recognition for his successes—he views every accomplishment as a team achievement. While he holds himself and others to high standards, it's his quiet acts of compassion, service, and genuine concern for people that truly set him apart. For those who know him well, Doug is one of the most caring and selfless leaders you'll ever meet."

"I love what I do," Clements added. "As long as I can keep it interesting and continue working with my kids every day, I'll keep doing it. If I wasn't doing something, I'd go crazy."

Tyler Clements added: "Working with my dad has been great; business is business and personal is personal. We keep those things separate. We have really good days, and we have really bad days, but five minutes later we're talking about what we're doing over the weekend or where we're going next. [We] have built a great relationship that's allowed us to build the business, work together and grow as both a team and a family throughout this entire journey." ■

A COMPANY OF **BUILDING PEOPLE**

Wadman Corporation has been delivering great builds for 75 years, but company leadership are most proud of the people-building legacy created in the process.

By Taylor Larsen

Since V. Jay Wadman started Wadman Corporation in 1951, the firm has led construction on hundreds of projects in Utah and elsewhere in the western U.S.

What remains, beyond many of those projects, is best captured by David Wadman, the firm's CEO: "You begin a project looking at nothing but an empty stretch of soil, and by the end, you've erected a facility that will remain for decades. Seeing that progression—watching a concept materialize into a finished structure—is deeply gratifying."

As many of these structures have gone vertical, the builder's mentality David described has elevated many within the firm to new heights and an enduring legacy with a design life that will extend well beyond the Wadman Corp.'s 75th anniversary.

Early Days Emphasize Company Values

After serving in the Navy from 1944 to 1948, Jay Wadman brought a military discipline back home and founded Wadman Corp. in Ogden, delivering small tenant improvements and repairs before securing vital contracts throughout Utah.

David Wadman remembers times visiting his father at the yard, in the office, or when Jay would arrive home exhausted from a hard day's work, pouring over blueprints on the kitchen table late at night.

"We could feel how much energy was poured into getting this thing off the ground," he said.

When David was ready to join the crew as a teenager, he cleaned job sites, set concrete forms for foundations, and ensured materials and equipment were ready for future jobs. But he wasn't certain that construction would be his career.

"[Dad] built the company from scratch and he wanted us to find our own way and figure out what we actually wanted to do," said David.

But the energy he felt, and the physical reality of going home tired and accomplishing something real and tangible made all the difference as he officially joined in 1979, participating in retail, hospitality, federal, and K-12 work across Utah and the West.

David credited the incredible, seasoned tradesmen and superintendents who showed him the value of craftsmanship, building job site camaraderie, and working with integrity as he came of age in the industry.

"Those men took immense pride in what they built; that was invaluable," he continued. "They didn't just teach me how to build; they taught me the value of a day's labor and how to treat people in this industry."

Payson Utah LDS Temple (all photos courtesy Wadman Corp.)

ENVE Composites Headquarters

When David became Wadman Corp.'s President in 1984, he said the entire industry was still grappling with the economic slump that made construction even more difficult.

"It was like we were starting over," he said.

Even with all of his experience in the field and office, David said his confidence wasn't near as high as it would be in future years, but he believed that Wadman Corp. would emerge successfully on the other side, saying: "I knew we had a team that worked well together."

Throughout that time, David credited his father and his work ethic for keeping the firm alive.

"He didn't cut corners," said David of Jay. "He taught us that your word is your bond in this business."

Wadman Corp. formed relationships with LaQuinta Hotels, building hotels all over the western U.S. while continuing to work with Smiths, Albertsons, and Walmart in retail. K-12 work continued in Weber, Davis, and Box Elder counties as the firm expanded its reach. Federal work flew beyond Hill Air Force Base to serve USPS and the National Park Service. Even religious work entered the project pipeline as Wadman Corp. began building facilities for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Building People Building People

The projects are memorable, but leadership emphasized the focus is on their people.

"At our core, we are a company of builders," said David Hogan. "We don't just push paper; we build projects that better the communities we live in."

Hogan, President of Wadman Corp. since 2007, said that outlook is a testament to David Wadman, who has empowered Hogan and the rest of the Wadman Corp. team while serving as a counselor with a profound trust in company leaders to execute their respective roles and responsibilities.

"Construction is an industry full of daily fires and market swings, but David is steady, solid, grounded, and principle-driven," Hogan said, complimenting the CEO as an incredibly stabilizing force, especially with David's disciplined financial mindset and instinctual understanding of people. "[David] knew how to calculate risk, protect the firm, connect with the employees, and make sure Wadman was built to last."

Building something that people want to be a part of for the long haul—something built to last—David said, "starts with the basics: you treat them with respect and important team members, pay them fairly, and give them a place where they know the doors aren't going to close the second the market dips."

Construction involves building, but it's a relationship business at heart—the Wadman Corp. culture reflects a deep ››


Goldenwest Federal Credit Union Corporate Headquarters


Waldorf Astoria

examples of selflessness that naturally extends into David's business dealings. "He wants others to be happy and is always looking for ways to help them. He is generous, hard-working, and a great example to me."

Surviving to Thriving

During the Great Recession, Wadman Corp.'s conservative growth strategy and penchant for serving repeat clients well kept the gears moving. While many companies were at a crossroads, Hogan said the firm refocused on the basics that had kept the company in business for over 50 years.

"On the client side, we didn't burn bridges; we just focused on getting the job done right so owners would want to hire us again," he said.

Company survival wasn't a top-down initiative.

"Our dedicated team continued to show up every single day and do incredible work," Hogan added. "Their dedication and refusal to drop our standards is really what kept us alive during those years."

For Spencer Bradley, VP of Business Development and Wadman Corp. teammate for nearly 30 years, what sets the company apart goes beyond great projects. The 75-year history of building, knowing the ins and outs of construction, and focusing on solutions make all the difference. It helps that he is another executive with experience across the construction scope; he worked as a carpenter before entering the office and taking on roles in estimating and business development.

"The clearest proof of how we operate is that we have a 75-year history with zero litigation against our owners," said Bradley. Disagreements and tough situations may be inevitable, but Wadman Corp. isn't interested in "lawyering up". Instead, he said, "We sit down with the client, we stick to our word, and we figure out a solution. For us, preserving that relationship is always the priority, and that reputation for workability is really important to us."

Ryan said that principled leadership that started with Grandpa Jay very much continued into the new generations of Wadman Corp. executives.

understanding of both. "Building people," as David called it, starts with creating a "genuine family environment" that extends from job site to office.

"When you actually invest in your employees, care about their growth, and treat them like they belong to a family, they aren't just punching a clock," David said. "They take absolute pride in the work and stay with you for the long haul."

That embodiment comes from a deep respect for people—exemplified by David—according to Ryan Wadman, an 11-year team member and third-generation Wadman at the company.

"My dad's greatest strength is that he truly cares about and loves people," Ryan began, crediting his mother, Ronda Wadman, and his father for their stellar


The Exchange


Jackson Hole Airport

"David Hogan is an excellent leader. He always seems to have his finger on the pulse of each unique situation and is very good at explaining what needs to be done," said Ryan, adding that the Wadman Corp. President excels at emphasizing the human side of the industry, managing people, expectations, trust, and complex relationships with aplomb. Sharp conversations are softened with honesty, transparency, and solutions, Ryan said, adding: "It's that steady, relationship-first approach that turns a one-time client into a twenty-year partner."

Many of the same clients and markets that have helped Wadman Corp. demonstrate its construction expertise have remained stellar for the firm as it has aged, with multifamily and hospitality work

growing in importance more recently.

For David Wadman, the extension of that relationship with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints led to one of the general contractor's most significant projects: the Payson Utah Temple.

"That was the first temple we completed, and it was a massive milestone for Wadman Corp.," said David. "It proved that we had the high-end craftsmanship, precision, and dedication required for that caliber of work, and it really set the stage for the temple projects we've taken on since.

Sadly, Jay Wadman passed away in 2013 before the company he founded and its trade partners put the finishing touches on the religious icon that stands tall above its pastoral surroundings in warm, precast concrete cladding. But, David said, reaching new heights in the next generations of leadership may have meant more to his father than completing such an intricate and detailed project.

"Jay was very happy with what we were doing and the growth we were having in all sectors that we are working in," said David.

Ownership Evolves into 4th Generation

As third-generation leadership nurtures the fourth, Wadman Corp. continues at the steady pace that has led the firm to this significant milestone, entrusting the great people at the company to build while elevating them into new or expanded positions to continue the firm's 75-year legacy of building people, relationships, and projects.

Hogan mentioned how Spencer Bradley has been an integral member of the ownership team for how he uses his time in estimating to speak to a variety of owners about the numbers and constructability behind their respective projects.

Bradley came aboard 28 years ago as a laborer on a hotel remodel and has never looked back. He joined the contractor's newly formed estimating department before becoming Chief Estimator in 2003. Estimating experience was instrumental as he took the reins to lead Wadman Corp.'s business development efforts, working with owners and architects to realize their visions.»

Bradley echoed the thoughts of the other executives in what's most important: the people. He credited both Davids—Hogan and Wadman—as exemplary leaders with profound respect and care for everyone at Wadman Corp.

"What really stands out about David Wadman is his genuine care for the people who work here," said Bradley.

Bradley said that Hogan has continued that people-first mentality, one informed by the firm President's wealth of construction knowledge from working across all levels of Wadman Corp, to be a relatable and effective leader steering the company forward.

"Having been a superintendent himself, David [Hogan] has the unique ability to truly relate to our field personnel," said Bradley. "He speaks their language and motivates them better than anyone I've ever seen."

Bradley was also complimentary of Ryan Wadman, having watched the younger Wadman join the family business and grow into his role over the last 11 years, following great examples before him to become "an irreplaceable member of our executive team."

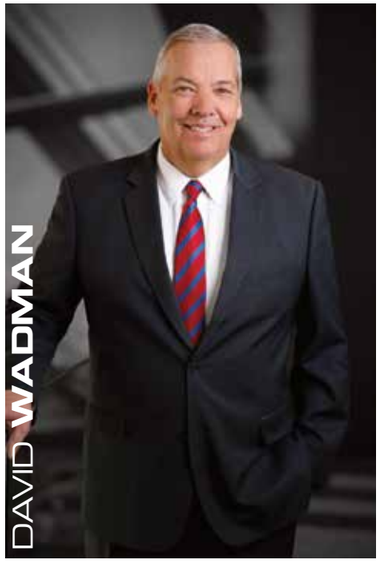
Ryan, Wadman Corp.'s CFO, has a similar story to many of his fellow executives, especially those who share his last name. David gave Ryan the same treatment that David received from Grandpa Jay when it came to joining the family business: it had to be Ryan's personal choice.

"I think my dad wanted me to decide my own path without feeling any pressure from him," Ryan recounted. "Instead, he taught us to work hard and treat people right through his own example."

Like father, like son, Ryan took to the family business when he joined Wadman in 2015, putting in the work as an estimator to learn how to bid jobs before becoming a project manager that learned how to run them. Operational experience increased as he learned the financial side of the business, slotting into the accounting department while earning his CPA; Ryan has been the firm's CFO for the last five years.

Was he ready for the role when the opportunity arose?

"I don't know if anybody is ever truly ready for a position like this, and those who think they are might be in for a rude awakening," he added. Work in the field, office, or classroom only goes so far to make someone ready to oversee the finances of a complex business that employs around 150 teammates, generating $305 million in 2025 revenues.



"Ryan is in leadership today because he understands this business from every angle," said David. "He knows how a building gets built, and he knows how the numbers work."

New Milestones to Reach

Revenues are up, but many Wadman Corp. leaders are more focused on taking care of the people who have built their careers there. Much has changed over 75 years of construction, but growth for growth's sake has never been the Wadman way, and it isn't changing; preserving what has been cultivated since 1951 is too important.

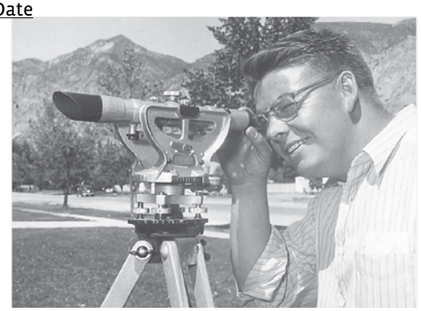
Bradley added, "Our focus is on organic growth that happens naturally when you take care of your people, deliver excellent work for your clients, and stick to your word."

Reflecting on the Wadman Corp. foundation laid down and built upon over so many years, Hogan takes immense pride in what it has allowed everyone in the company to do: build.

"One of the most rewarding things for me is being able to drive across the state and point out all the incredible buildings our people have constructed over the years," he said. The reward from the toil, sweat, problem-solving, coordination, and teamwork it took to get them from blueprint to ribbon-cutting is sweet. "That sense of pride in what our people accomplish and how we grow together—that's what keeps me coming to work every day." ■

Wadman Corporation Significant Projects

Project	Location	Completed Date
Waldorf Astoria	Park City	2008
LDS Temple	Payson	2015
ENVE Composites	Ogden	2017
Project Open	Salt Lake City	2017
Smith's Marketplace	St. George	2018
The Exchange	Salt Lake City	2023
Goldenwest Federal Credit Union Corporate Office	Washington Terrace	2024
Walmart Supercenter	Eagle Mountain	2025
Mountain America Credit Union	Sandy	2026
Jackson Hole Airport	Jackson, WY	Ongoing


Wadman Corporation Founder V. Jay Wadman

THE INNOVATION ENGINE

Daylighting is ubiquitous throughout the building, with spaces designed for maximum collaboration and innovative thought. (Photo by Jared Kenitzer; courtesy VCBO)

(Pg. 61 photos by Cody Brown; courtesy VCBO)

The University of Utah's James LeVoy Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation is redefining the journey from idea to patient care.

By Bradley Fullmer

Medical breakthroughs rarely begin with a dramatic moment.

More often, they start quietly—with a physician frustrated by a surgical limitation, an engineer sketching a solution on a whiteboard, a student experimenting with a 3D printer, or an entrepreneur convinced there is a better way to produce results.

The challenge has never been a shortage of ideas; rather, it's navigating the long, expensive, and often fragmented journey from inspiration to implementation.

Which makes the new James LeVoy Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation the latest and greatest new project on the University of Utah campus, one that is far more than just another academic building, but an ambitious attempt to rethink how medical technologies are conceived, designed, prototyped, tested, commercialized, and ultimately delivered to physicians and patients.

The 60,000-SF building houses innovation laboratories, fabrication shops, startup incubators, collaborative workspaces, advanced prototyping equipment, surgical simulation suites, and one of the nation's most sophisticated medical device development environments. More importantly, spaces were intentionally designed to accelerate innovation. Rather than separating physicians from engineers, researchers from entrepreneurs, or students from industry partners, the facility brings everyone together under one roof, creating an ecosystem where ideas move rapidly from concept to commercialization.

For Mark Paul, Executive Director of the Center for Medical Innovation at the University of Utah, the vision was to create a building fundamentally different from a typical research facility.

"We set out with an audacious goal—I wanted to build and design something nobody else had—not Boston, not Mayo [Clinic], not Houston, not Stanford. I wanted something different, unique and better than anyone else in the world," said Paul, who spent more than three decades in the medical device industry, including executive leadership roles with Boston Scientific and Stryker, where he helped establish innovation centers around the world. His career took him across Europe, Asia, and North America, exposing him to countless research facilities and commercialization programs.

Those experiences shaped the vision for what would become the Sorenson Center.

"Our mission was clear: create a space that fosters and inspires innovation, collaboration, and the acceleration of new medical technologies, addressing the pinch points that often prevent medical startups from succeeding while also providing an environment where physicians can be trained to improve patient care."

Instead of replicating what already existed elsewhere, the University of Utah set out to combine the strongest elements of research, engineering, entrepreneurship, and physician education into a single, highly collaborative environment.

The result is a facility that reflects the state's growing influence within the global life sciences industry while positioning the University as an international leader in medical innovation.

More Than a Building

Originally envisioned as a component of the University's new Spencer Fox Eccles School of Medicine, the Center for Medical Innovation gradually evolved into an independent facility—one capable of establishing its own identity while honoring the vision of the Sorenson family.

"The University of Utah was very sensitive to the donor families supporting the project and ultimately decided it deserved to be its own standalone building," said Celestia Carson, Principal with Salt Lake-based VCBO Architecture. "Fortunately, VCBO had already been involved in programming that portion of the project, so we had a strong foundation to build from."

The University's leadership then recruited Paul to lead the Center for Medical Innovation, dramatically expanding the project's ambition.

"Once it became a standalone facility, the program evolved significantly," Carson said. "Mark came on board and brought a vision that simply hadn't existed before. His leadership transformed the project."

Another key player in the project's success was Justin Brunson, Director of Operations for the Center for Medical Innovation, whose role quickly extended well beyond that of a typical owner representative.

"Justin was an exceptional client," Carson said. "He immersed himself in every aspect of the project—from architectural hardware and finishes to technical specifications. He truly became part of the design team."

Carlos Liñán, Associate Principal with VCBO Architecture, added, "Justin may be one of the smartest clients we've ever worked with. He started with little knowledge of the construction process and immersed himself in every detail. He learned construction drawings, specifications, mechanical systems, and building operations to the point where he understood virtually every component of the project. His level of commitment was extraordinary."

Honoring an Extraordinary Legacy

While the building looks toward the future, its inspiration traces back several decades to James LeVoy Sorenson, one of Utah's most prolific inventors and entrepreneurs who earned more than 50 patents that helped transform modern healthcare. His innovations—disposable IV catheters, cardiovascular monitoring technologies, and other breakthrough medical devices—helped reshape patient care around the world.»

(featured, left image pg. 63, pg. 64 by Cody Brown; courtesy VCBO)

For the project team, honoring his legacy became a responsibility as much as a design objective.

"Whenever a project is funded through private donations, there's a tremendous responsibility to honor the donor's vision," Carson said. "Building on the Sorenson family's legacy—particularly James Sorenson's pioneering work in medical device innovation—was something Mark and Justin took very seriously. Every decision focused on creating a building that reflected the mission of the Sorenson Foundation and advanced the legacy of innovation that James Sorenson established."

Paul developed a deep appreciation for that legacy throughout the project.

"Over the last two and a half years, I've almost felt like part of the Sorenson family through all the conversations, counsel, and direction they provided," he said. "I think Jim would have loved this building. With his innovative mind—building catheters, blood systems, and countless medical devices—this would have been a dream project for him. I can't imagine a better person to name this building after."

One story shared by the Sorenson family that resonated deeply with the design team was that many of his earliest ideas were born around the family kitchen table.

"That became an important design inspiration for us," said Carson. "Within the administrative area, we created a collaborative gathering space that serves as the building's 'kitchen table'—a place where people naturally come together to share ideas, solve problems, and inspire one another."

Liñán believes that space captures the building's essence.

"It was intentionally designed to feel like a family setting—an environment where everyone is comfortable exchanging ideas, offering suggestions, and collaborating openly. It reflects the spirit of innovation that defines the entire building."

Designing Within Constraints

As inspiring as the vision was, translating it into architecture proved anything but straightforward, starting with a challenging, tight worksite that was bounded by existing campus buildings. The answer to the site's many constraints emerged during one of the earliest design presentations.

VCBO presented four architectural concepts to the Sorenson family. Three were relatively conventional—rectilinear buildings softened with rounded corners. The fourth was different, with sweeping curves and an elongated, sculptural form unique from other campus buildings.

"The family immediately gravitated toward the football-shaped concept," said Liñán. "I believe they wanted the architecture itself to communicate innovation—something unique that reflected the building's purpose."

The geometry accomplished much more than creating a memorable silhouette. It maximized the constrained site, preserved important view corridors between neighboring buildings, and established a striking presence along Mario Capecchi Drive. It also reinforced a metaphor that had become central to the project long before construction began.

"Mark always envisioned this building as the flagship for medical innovation," Liñán says. "The form naturally supported that idea."

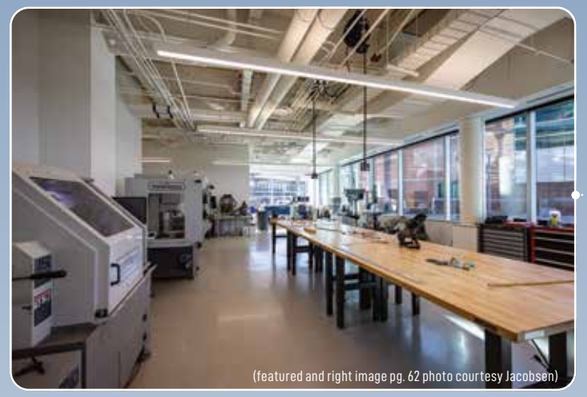
VCBO embraced that concept throughout the design process. The west end of the building—tapering to a gentle point—became what the architects affectionately refer to as the "prow of the ship."

"On Levels 2 and 3, that area contains meeting rooms with spectacular views across the valley," said Carson. "It reinforces the idea of the building serving as the flagship for innovation while creating memorable gathering spaces for collaboration."

The result is architecture that feels bold without becoming theatrical. Every curve responds to a functional need—improving circulation, maximizing floor area, preserving campus relationships, and strengthening the building's identity. It's a design that feels purposeful rather than expressive for expression's sake.

Darker exterior cladding intentionally contrasts with neighboring facilities while remaining respectful of the University's broader architectural feel. Brick elements anchor portions of the façade, connecting the building to the campus's traditional character while allowing the sculptural metal skin to become its defining visual feature.

"The owner was very committed to selecting a material that looked and felt authentic—not simply painted metal, but a finish that honestly expressed the material itself," said Liñán. "We studied numerous options before finding the right color, texture, and level of reflectivity."



(featured and right image pg. 62 photo courtesy Jacobsen)

Each metal panel incorporates a subtle double-rib profile that catches daylight and gives the building an ever-changing appearance.

"Early in the morning, the building appears much lighter," Liñán said. "Later in the day, it becomes much darker. I love that the building never looks exactly the same twice."

"Throughout the day, the shadows shift, the texture changes, and the façade continually evolves," Carson added. "It gives the building a sense of movement and energy."

Architecture That Mirrors Innovation

Rather than organizing departments in a traditional academic hierarchy, Carson noted, "We wanted the building's organization to mirror the process of medical innovation itself. As you move upward through the building, you essentially follow the journey of a medical device—from concept and prototyping to commercialization and clinical testing."

That philosophy begins immediately upon entering the building. Instead of a conventional lobby filled with seating and artwork, visitors are greeted by active maker spaces where students, physicians, and engineers collaborate around fabrication equipment, machine tools, and advanced 3D printers.

"The first floor is devoted to design, innovation, and fabrication," Carson said. "That's where you'll find the prototyping lab, machine shop, advanced manufacturing equipment and 3D printers. It's the hands-on level where ideas become physical prototypes."

"I've always felt lobbies consume expensive real estate without doing much," Paul added. "Here, students, doctors, researchers and nurses can use 3D printers and begin building medical innovations right in the lobby."

Visitors don't simply observe innovation, they witness it, with Brunson emphasizing the importance of that transparency.

"This building was designed to remove barriers," he said. "We wanted people from completely different disciplines crossing paths every day. A surgeon might walk past an engineering student who's working on a prototype. An entrepreneur may strike up a conversation with a physician who has identified an unmet clinical need. Those unexpected interactions often become the beginning of something much bigger."

Building the Vision

The building's sweeping curves influenced virtually every aspect of the construction process and offered unique challenges to the team, said Justin Giles, Project Manager with Salt Lake-based Jacobsen Construction

"This project had a lot of unique elements from a general contractor standpoint," said Giles. "It features extensive radius walls on both the exterior and interior. If you look at it from above, it almost resembles a ship—pointed on one end and flatter on the back side. Because of all the curved walls, traditional layout methods simply didn't work."

Instead of relying on conventional construction techniques, Jacobsen Construction partnered with Sandy-based Wallboard Specialties to deploy Dusty, a robotic layout system that imports CAD files and digitally prints wall locations directly onto the concrete slab with remarkable precision.

"We joked that everyone needed to throw their tape measures away," Giles says. "Every point along the curve had to be exact. The technology allowed us to lay out the building efficiently and accurately."

Excavating the site was another challenge, requiring crews to dig nearly 30 feet below grade and installing an extensive shoring system around much of the site. As crews dug deeper, Giles said they encountered an unexpected surprise left behind from an earlier development—approximately 40 concrete columns 36 inches in diameter and 10 to 12 feet deep; all had to be removed.

Site logistics was another daunting task. With virtually no laydown area available, materials arrived exclusively on a just-in-time schedule. In addition, the proximity to one of University Hospital's busiest service corridors required constant coordination to ensure a peaceful coexistence between construction and healthcare.

"Crane placement was highly strategic, and eventually even our primary access point disappeared as sidewalks and grades were completed," said Giles. "At the»

same time, hospital delivery trucks were constantly moving through the area, so we had to coordinate carefully to ensure construction never disrupted hospital operations."

Despite those challenges, the project maintained an aggressive schedule many believed couldn't be achieved.

"Honestly, a lot of people doubted we could meet the timeline," Giles added. "Finding out afterward that many thought it was impossible was actually pretty satisfying because the team pulled it off."

Innovative Mechanical System

Jarrett Capstick, COO of Salt Lake-based Lynk Engineers, said the Sorenson Center is already serving as a case study for building electrification and high-performance design.

"We're using it as a case study in an electrification presentation that offers AIA continuing education credits," Capstick said. "We're also tracking the building's energy performance so we can eventually publish an ASHRAE article after about a year of operation."

Unlike most University of Utah buildings, the Sorenson Center operates independently of the campus's central utility system—a challenge that became an opportunity.

"It was impractical to connect to the university's chilled and high-temperature water systems," Capstick said. "That allowed us to create a standalone building that still supports the University's emissions-reduction and electrification goals."

The centerpiece of that strategy is a 45,000-gallon thermal storage tank in the basement that functions as a "thermal battery." Operating between roughly 50 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit, the tank allows heat pumps to either extract or reject heat as building demands fluctuate.

"It works much like a ground-source system without the cost of drilling boreholes," Capstick explained. "The system significantly reduces peak energy demand, allowing the boilers and cooling towers to be sized at only about 70% of what a conventional standalone system would require."

By spreading heating and cooling loads over a full 24-hour cycle, the design reduces electrical demand and overall energy consumption while relying on conventional heat pumps and condenser-water loops.

"Beyond the thermal storage system, the rest of the building is actually pretty standard," Capstick said. "It's proven technology that's serviceable, reliable and, in many ways, beautifully simple."

Capstick said the project marks Lynk Engineers' first application of this thermal storage approach and may be among the first of its kind in the country.

"The technology itself isn't necessarily new—it's the implementation that's innovative," he said. "It grew out of extensive collaboration with the University and project team to meet ambitious energy goals within the project's budget."

Collaborative Effort Pays Off

Ultimately, those involved with the project point to the synergy of the collaborative effort from all parties as the reason for its success.

Carson credited the University of Utah, Jacobsen Construction, the consultant team and the Sorenson family for embracing a common vision from the very beginning.

"Architects often receive much of the recognition," she said, "but in reality, we're simply conducting an orchestra. Every consultant, engineer, contractor, and university representative contributed something essential. Projects like this require hundreds of people working together, and that's exactly what happened here."

Giles echoed that sentiment.

"What impressed me most wasn't necessarily the complexity of the building," he said. "It was the team. Everyone understood what we were trying to accomplish and stayed focused on making the project successful."

Liñán agreed, adding: "It was one of those rare projects where everyone was genuinely working toward the same objective. That doesn't happen every day."

"It's really about eliminating barriers," Paul concluded. "Innovation doesn't happen in isolation. It happens when people with different expertise come together to solve problems." ■

University of Utah James LeVoy Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation
Start/Completion: June 2024/January 2026
Cost: $50 million ($35.7 million construction cost)
Delivery Method: CM/GC
Stories/Levels: Five (four above ground)
Owner: University of Utah; State of Utah DFCM
Owner's Rep: Justin Brunson

Design Team
Architect: VCBO Architecture
Civil Engineer: Kimley-Horn
Electrical Engineer: Spectrum Engineers (Lynk Engineers)
Mechanical Engineer: Colvin Engineering (Lynk Engineers)
Structural Engineer: Reaveley Engineers
Geotechnical Engineer: Atlas
Interior Design: VCBO Architecture
Landscape Architect: Arcsitio Design

Construction Team
General Contractor: Jacobsen Construction
Concrete: Jacobsen Construction
Plumbing: Alternative Mechanical
HVAC: Alternative Mechanical
Electrical: CR Lighting & Electric
Audio/Visual: Cache Valley Electric
Masonry: BUILT Exteriors
Drywall: Wallboard Specialties
Painting: C5 Coatings
Tile/Stone: Dowland Tile & Stone
Millwork: Boswell Wasatch
Flooring: CP Build
Roofing: Utah Tile & Roofing
Glazing/Curtain Wall: B&D Glass
Waterproofing: Utah Tile & Roofing
Steel Fabrication: Cives Corporation, Rightway Steel, Clegg Steel
Steel Erection: Unlimited Steel
Excavation: Siri Contracting, Jones Excavating
Landscaping: Stratton & Brätt
Demolition: Siri Contracting

CLASSIC AT THE CAPITOL CAMPUS

Capitol Hill's master plan is complete, and the new North Capitol Building delivers classical architectural splendor that rounds out the state government campus.

By Taylor Larsen

The early Christian Apostle Paul wasn't an architect, but his words in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians echo a sentiment felt when seeing the latest example of classical architecture in Utah: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," wrote Paul.

Witnessing classical columns, regal interiors, a museum and archive befitting Utah's history—plus the transcendent craftsmanship and architectural majesty that ties it all together—establishes the North Capitol Building (NCB) as a timeless classic and a fitting bookend to the Utah State Capitol Complex Master Plan.

The Saga Begins

Whitney Ward, VCBO Principal and Principal Programmer on the project, said that a 2018 Space Assessment for state government operations was happening concurrently with Salt Lake-based ajc architects' feasibility study for a new Archives Building to safely and securely store the State of Utah's priceless art and historic artifacts. The opportunity to bring the NCB and Museum of Utah together under one roof, she said, "emerged as a win-win for Utah."

The gears of government tend to move slowly, grindingly slow, some may say, but the planning and care to do things right—to create something timeless and built to last that honors Utah history and welcomes its future—is noteworthy and laudable.

Salt Lake-based VCBO Architecture and ajc architects were chosen in a joint venture in 2019. While ajc would design the interior collections and museum component (see pg. 78) within the NCB, VCBO would lead architectural and design efforts of the main structure, central and north plazas, as well as the two parking garages under each.

The Capitol Preservation Board (CPB) and Utah's Division of Facilities and Construction Management (DFCM) acted as project owners, with stakeholder involvement from the building's future end-users.

The VCBO role, beyond bringing the master plan to fruition, was programming across the stakeholder spectrum. Ward described it as "a series of test fits" to see what program could work "effectively within the building, and how this project could meet the most pressing space needs of the complex."

Master Plan in Action

Karen Ferguson, an Associate Principal at VCBO and the firm's Project Manager on the NCB, said she and her design teammates drew from a deep well of understanding of the functionality and classical synergy at play on campus. Designers balanced the classical design imperatives with the demands of the DFCM's High Performance Building Standard for a classic made modern.››

The North Capitol Building sits in the foreground of the Utah State Capitol Complex. (photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

Ferguson, now retired, has been a Capitol Hill expert since she served as VCBO's Project Manager on the Capitol Restoration starting in 2001; completed in 2009. She and the VCBO team consulted the Utah State Capitol Complex's 2002 Master Plan that called for all buildings on Capitol Hill to follow the classical architecture hierarchy across the three orders—Corinthian, Ionic, Doric.

For those new to classical architecture like me, the VCBO team explained the hierarchy between the orders, where the Utah State Capitol would top the campus hierarchy via the Corinthian order, the highest and newest order—as new as something developed over two-and-a-half millennia ago can be.

The Utah State Capitol, designed by Richard Kletting in Neoclassical revival style and built between 1912-1916, cost just over $2.7 million to build (over $92 million in 2026 dollars—how's that for inflation?). The granite-clad architectural marvel may be most notable for its grandiose dome that rises majestically above the building, delivering a sense of regality as one looks up to Capitol Hill.

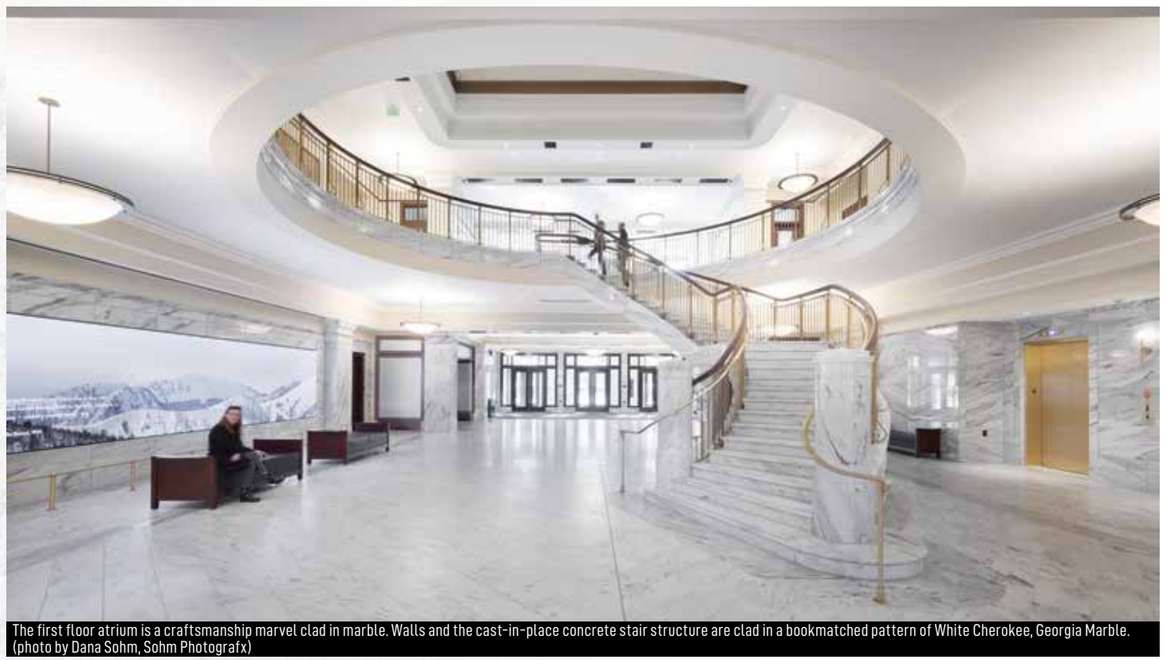
But the true example of its place in the classical hierarchy comes from how the Capitol exhibits the Corinthian order. The wreaths in the entablature atop the columns are one tell, but the most notable example is its—stay with me here—"capitals", or column tops. These capitals on the Capitol are replete with stunning craftsmanship; the hand-carved granite acanthus leaves and scrolls serve as an architectural reminder of the gravitas of the building as the seat of state power.

Senate and House buildings on the east and west sides of campus, respectively, were designed and built in 2004, both following the Doric order—less a symbol of the public's feelings toward many in Legislature and more of an adherence to classical hierarchy to further emphasize the Capitol's importance.

Missing from campus, but in full detail in the master plan, was a structure designed to the Ionic order, according to Nathan Leavitt, VCBO Principal and Principal in Charge of the project. The structure wouldn't copy the iconic Capitol. Instead, he said. "We had to draw inspiration from its detailing, its proportions, and its materials, and develop a new design statement,"

Bob Loversidge and David Vottero from Schooley Caldwell, long-time VCBO collaborators and classical design experts, helped the VCBO team identify building height, window proportions, stone joint layout, column spacing, and the use and detailing of its rusticated stone base.

Plans coalesced to demolish the former State Office Building and whisk many of its operations to a new State Office Building in Taylorsville, with the future NCB built as the final, architecturally cohesive piece to round out the state government campus.



The first floor atrium is a craftsmanship marvel clad in marble. Walls and the cast-in-place concrete stair structure are clad in a bookmatched pattern of White Cherokee, Georgia Marble. (photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photografx)

Central Parking Structure Kicks Off New Construction

Plans turned to action, and Mike Jueschke, Project Director with Salt Lake-based Okland Construction, and his teammates joined the project in Fall 2021 with the demolition of the old State Office Building and data center to make way for a modern classic.

The north parking garage and its two levels below grade always existed in the master plan, but the campus's central parking garage needed a retrofit. With so much of the campus under construction, the project team decided to replace the existing garage to minimize future rework that would disturb the new central plaza. Extensive soil testing data from GSH Geotechnical helped map out dewatering efforts for both the underground parking structures and the massive concrete vault under the NCB that would store Museum of Utah artifacts.

Great forethought doesn't mean an easier job, laughed Jueschke: "We're not in the business of making it easy for sure." Okland's expected staging and construction area would be sacrificed to demolish and rebuild the parking structure between legislative sessions—March 2023 through January 2024—utilizing Okland's structural concrete expertise and existing on-site presence to coordinate work across eight bid packages.

The project team began efforts by designing the parking garage two-and-a-half feet lower. More space meant more soil depth for the central plaza's greenery and more drainage atop 10,100 CY of concrete that make up the new mild reinforced concrete structure.

The construction team completed the central parking garage scope in nine months while building continued elsewhere. Jueschke said the builder dedicated extra resources to the north parking garage to ensure that teams could begin with the NCB's north façade as the sequencing flipped to start there.

Jueschke said that the revised plan meant Okland was at their coordinating best across the Utah State Capitol Complex's geography. Builders worked their way out of the hole to the west for access to the central parking garage while leaving a zone along its northern edge for taller lifts to begin work on the NCB's south façade.

All About that Base (Isolator)

As steel prices began to climb during the design phase, architects shifted the building's structural system from steel to concrete. As they grappled with the lack of space to bring in the MEP and ductwork required from the many system-intensive uses, and the fear from the project team about inter-story drift that would have greatly, and visually, affected the stone jointing, stakeholders gave the go-ahead midway through design to insert base isolators below the building to deal with a potential major seismic event.

Having served across the Capitol restoration and the reimagining of the NCB, Ferguson said each project was totally different, even if the restoration was informative for integrating the base isolation system. Retrofitting a historic build, she and fellow VCBO teammates said, is much more difficult than incorporating it within a new build.

"We worked with Reaveley [Engineers] intensively there," said Ferguson of the efforts during the restoration to bring in temporary supports, removing footings, adding in isolators, and then building a new base.

A second try on campus—this time for a new building—had Ferguson relieved that a timeless classic would be going in after the base isolation was in place. A lead-rubber style of base isolator was installed in the NCB, allowing up to approximately 24 inches of horizontal displacement during a seismic event to occur within a hidden "moat" that surrounds the building.

New Technology and Construction Methodologies Deliver a Classic

With base isolators in place, another of the bid packages—the most visually significant—came to the forefront: exterior stone.

"We had the exterior stone shell out to bid while we were in design development for the building itself," said Ferguson. "It was our critical path from day one because of the procurement and design time for us and [stone fabricators and installers]."

Granite was chosen as the cladding for the NCB, much as it clads the historic Capitol. Since the original granite from Little Cottonwood Canyon was no longer available, designers scoured the world and found a close match in Bianco Sardo granite quarried from Sardinia—the Italian island rich in stonemasonry history west of the mainland in the Mediterranean Sea. Leavitt reported that the stone traveled to Massa, in Italy's Tuscany region, where fabricators spent considerable effort to shape and finish the stone to closely resemble the Capitol.

With so many functional and aesthetic requests, Jueschke said the general contractor offered its heaviest design input regarding the overall building envelope. Ensuring that stonework would meet the classically-inspired design intent while interfacing with the envelope was a major discussion point as the project team worked through incorporating not just a beautiful office with a 100-year design life, but a museum and the required collections space below.

Jueschke said penetrations into the stone, and subsequent weatherproofing and thermal bridging issues, were major concerns. To meet the moment, Okland enlisted Salt Lake-based KEPCO+, to assist with the custom stonework, working in››

The State Room's custom wool carpets, Sapele wood trim, and flower-motif frieze are a stately statement piece on the second floor. (photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

concert with envelope consultants from UNVC.

KEPCO+ is another firm with relevant stonework experience since assisting on the Capitol restoration and the Senate and House buildings. Its team proposed a prefabricated, panelized approach to dramatically reduce the number of membrane penetrations, minimize thermal bridging, and deliver a tight envelope to meet and exceed Utah's High Performance Building Standard.

Bruce Knaphus, President of KEPCO+, said the cladding challenge was multifaceted— meeting a modern construction schedule with a historic, heavy-cubic, classically-designed building, then marrying those elements in the NCB's Seismic Zone 4 location within a sensible budget.

Easy, right? "Intensely challenging," Knaphus said.

Knaphus detailed the specs: cutting off 2/3 of the back of the stone; hanging it 4- to 6-in. thick and replacing it with a frame; building it off site with all the tolerances and tricks to keep the weight and eliminate sagging.

"That way everything looks crisp and looks like it was done one stone at a time," he said of going from shop trial run to final delivery.

The visually stunning granite cladding came with a twist—KEPCO+'s field team had to erect it blind as to minimize the building penetrations. "We had no access to the back of pre-fab unit. So you're landing a panel on a connection scheme that you designed while having built the whole wall in the shop, then having to pull it apart and put it back together," Knaphus said. With no opportunity for field adjustments: "You've got one shot to get it right."

Catherine Hutton, VP of Contract Administration at KEPCO+, added another coordination detail: "The stone was cut months before the building was erected. To have it all fit in perfectly with those types of tolerances was a monumental feat."

Hutton credited the crane operator—also working blind as the crane was located on the other side of the building—flying in the 9,000- to 15,000-pound, stone-clad panels and relying solely on radio direction from project teammates on the ground. "It was really incredible to see that level of expertise between the crane operator and our guys," she said, "to accept that panel perfectly."

Knaphus said the cladding system and delivery were a microcosm of the entire NCB project. "The teamwork of the whole project was unlike any project I've ever worked on. We've never had a project where the total team worked so collaboratively—from designers, architects, engineers, the Capitol Preservation Board, DFCM, Okland, and the subcontractors," he said," it was a total team effort.

Jueschke said that the KEPCO+ team was a tremendous asset in planning and execution. "Their ability to predict tolerances is unbelievable—they live and breathe by their tolerances. They take it seriously and know that their name is on the line," said Jueschke. "To have a company that recognizes that this is going to be viewed for 100-plus years…it's an amazing installation"

Leavitt pointed to the brilliantly executed curvature of the new columns for another classical architecture teaching moment. Entasis, or the curvature of the columns, matched those of the Capitol. "Much like Kletting designed originally, these columns curve outward up a third of the column before curving back in," he said.

For the VCBO team, one of the best design stories came from developing the column capitals. "We knew we needed a remarkable column top," Leavitt said of the design challenge.

Schooley Caldwell teammates proposed that the NCB pay homage to the original Ionic-order columns within the Capitol atrium, what Leavitt described as "an appropriate connection between the two buildings."

Okland used LiDAR scanning to capture the historic interior columns while VCBO scaled the century-old columns, combined with millennia-old architectural history to follow the Ionic order, to match the larger proportions of the NCB's new exterior.

"I like thinking that a craftsman from 1915 carved our capitals," said Leavitt of creating a new history with new technology. "We simply used modern techniques to bring his work forward in time."

To Leavitt's point: an early 20th-century stonemason would feel right at home with the precision, craftsmanship, and attention to detail on the NCB's modern marvel of an exterior.

While some finishes were machine-applied, rusticated base stones and column capitals received the craftsman's touch, with the latter containing a unique, Utah-centric ornamentation between the scroll-like volutes atop the column capitals: the sego lily.

Leavitt praised the Italian stonemasons at Campolonghi for their fabrication work, taking a CNC machine to carve out the intricate details before spending dozens of hours hand-finishing each one.

Jueschke gave Campolonghi its deserved flowers, too, saying: "Frankly, the Italians are the best stonecutters—they are incredible."

Their pride in the craft comes through beyond the look, but in meeting the exact tolerances required for KEPCO+ to work its magic—making intensive and time-consuming tasks seem effortless for a unified, beautiful, and timeless panelized jointing and assembly.

The North Capitol Building's Ionic columns—and their exquisite scroll-like volutes that define their capitals—required top-tier coordination work across design, fabrication, and installation to meet the standards set in the 2002 master plan. (photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

Craftsman's Paradise

If the granite wasn't a strong enough witness to the power of exceptional craftsmanship, the project also incorporated a custom stained glass art piece, extensive marble work, and a spiral staircase within the building lobby—a favorite feature of Leavitt's.

"Their curve sweeps through the space, occupying the center of the room, without obstructing the central axis of the building," he said of the cast-in-place concrete stair structure clad in White Cherokee, Georgia Marble.

"We wanted to fit within the campus's aesthetic language while maintaining a lower hierarchy than the historic Capitol," Leavitt continued. The geometry of the stairs is unique on the campus, Leavitt mentioned, and the painted mild steel railings match the Capitol's lesser stairs, complete with bronze handrails and Sapele wood railing caps. Stone treads and stringers share similarities to the Capitol's grand atrium stairs.

While looking out over the campus from the staircase is picturesque, looking up reveals another marvel—a custom stained glass work of art and a statement piece fitting for the Capitol Complex.

While there is plenty to look at on the NCB, "I like watching people enter the central atrium space," said Leavitt. "Once one person in the group looks up, the whole group's attention turns to the art above."

The art discussed came from Holdman Studios, designers of the nine-foot tall, 25-foot-by-25-foot stained glass dome.

Tom Holdman, the Lehi-based firm's Founder and President, said the artwork came from Dallin Orr, Holdman Studios' Lead Design Artist. Captured within the 89 panels and 14,000 individual glass pieces that comprise the artwork are renditions of Utah symbols—landmarks like Delicate Arch and Goblin Valley's hoodoo rock formations; flora like the Pando Aspen Clones of Fishlake National Forest and the sego lily; animals like elk, seagulls, and the Bonneville Cutthroat trout; and symbols >>

(photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

from a Utahraptor skull and the Hopi Kokopelli—all these and the many others across the nearly three-dozen symbols are brilliantly captured in colors made more vivid as sunlight passes through.

One glass panel includes sand gathered from all 29 Utah counties, forming the roots of a bristlecone pine tree. According to Orr, that collectivity at play in the panel is a microcosm of his goal for the artwork: depicting how Utah's seemingly chaotic biodiversity harmonizes into a beautiful whole revolving around the sun, in this case a custom glass cupola in the center of the glass artwork.

For Holdman, the cupola shines for how it elevates the piece from stunning to immaculate.

"We came up with the concept to do the curve, but then this concept to put a cupola above actually shifts light," he said, explaining how the pieces of telescope glass within the cupola deliver an incredible visual novelty. "The way the sunlight comes in at different times of day gives it a beautiful perspective that is just truly magical."

Awe-inspiring art deserves a frame to match, and Jueschke credited Salt Lake-based Sheet Metal Specialties for building the metal frame that holds the glass artwork in place.

"That frame is really something else," said Jueschke. "You don't get the best perspective of how much curvature it contains, and the dome within the dome—it's exceptional work."

> "We came up with the concept to do the curve, but then this concept to put a cupola above actually shifts light. The way the sunlight comes in at different times of day gives it a beautiful perspective that is just truly magical."
>
> —Tom Holdman

Okland's Project Director credited superintendents Richie Cameron and Chad Robertson for their efforts coordinating the dance floor scaffolding system for Sheet Metal Specialties to shine, and sequencing the other scopes in a way to be at the right place at the right time, delivering what Jueschke described as "a once-in-a-career-type installation."

Holdman described the stained glass as "an iconic piece" and "an honor to be able to share a message in Utah that we are all together; we unite."

The skylight above the atrium is an architectural, engineering, and visual wonder reflecting the diversity of Utah's flora and fauna. (photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

Orr was equally proud of not just the artwork, but what it meant as an ongoing practitioner of custom glazing. "This changed my life," he said of the artwork, "and changed how I view what could be done in glass."

Interior Finishes Elevate an Icon

Perhaps the final witness in construction craftsmanship comes via the marble interior pieces throughout the atrium, detailing that continues the Capitol's material awe.

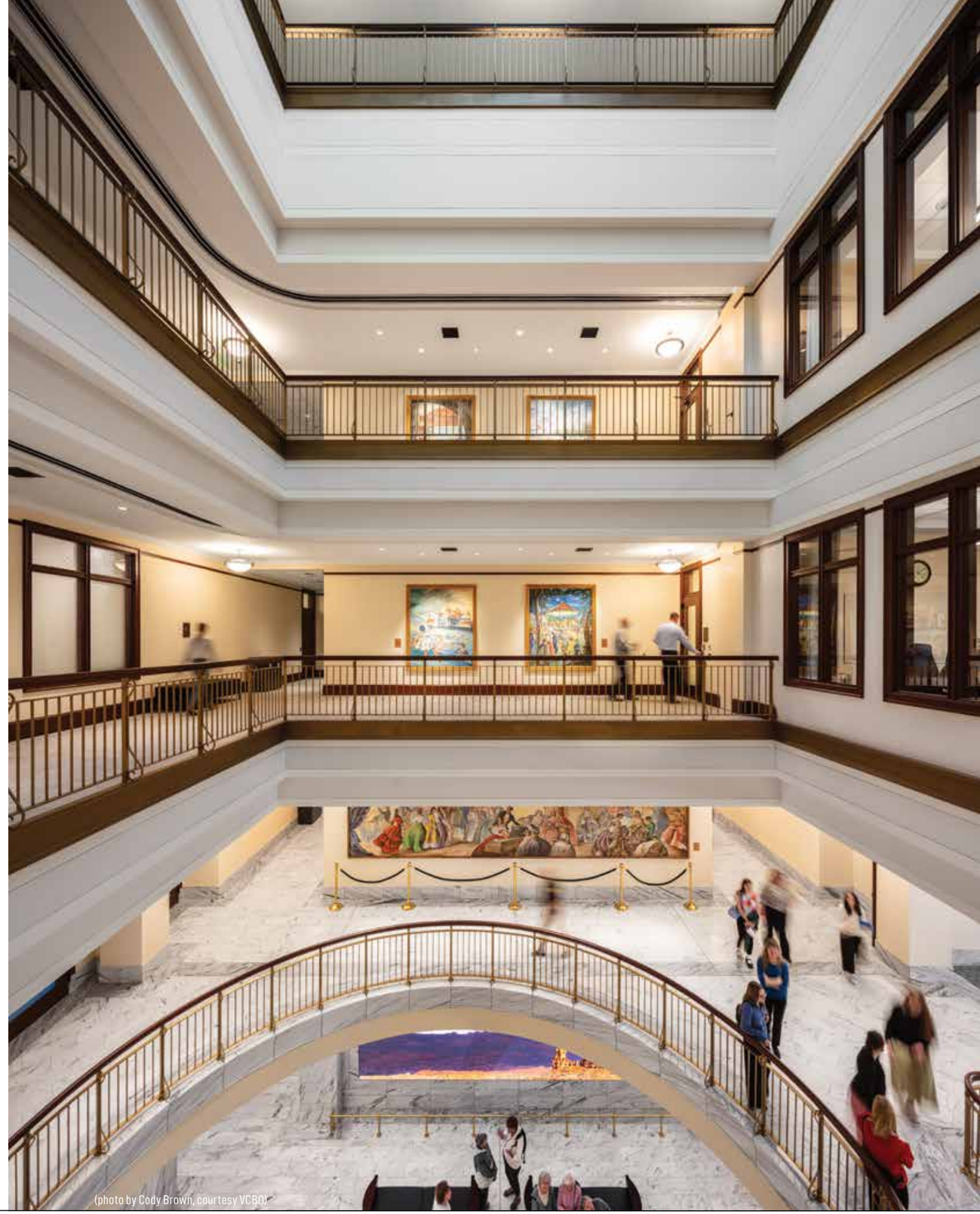
The quarry that served the Capitol, located in the state of Georgia, is still in operation and made the White Cherokee marble block selection much easier, according to Leavitt.

"One carefully considered detail was the diamond-matched stone wall panels," said Leavitt. These consist of adjacent stone panels cut from a single block, symmetrically mirrored and aligned—bookmatched—to create a continuous, diamond-shaped pattern featured throughout the Capitol and NCB, he continued, "and now serve as an aesthetic tie between the two buildings' interiors."

Nancy McKendrick, Associate and Interior Designer with VCBO, said the mahogany present in the Capitol couldn't continue within the NCB—most mahogany trade is restricted via international treaty. Designers pivoted, incorporating Sapele, another tropical hardwood that belongs in the same plant family as mahogany; this Sapele wood is present on many of the railings, doors and door frames, wall base, picture rails, and interior millwork like built-in custom cabinetry, shelving, and desks.

McKendrick giggled with a reveal—not everything is as it appears. She explained how metal entry doors and museum vestibule frames on the main level were painted to resemble the Sapale wood finish. She and the VCBO team credited Tony T Painting for another tie to the Capitol and its faux-painted doors throughout, saying: "Tony T Painting did a marvelous job emulating the wood and style of painting used in the Capitol."

The offices for departments that »



(photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO)

migrated to the third and fourth floors of the NCB each follow a cohesive palette, McKendrick said, while differences in lighting and furniture give each department office its own unique flair. More sensitive areas contain fritted interior glazing at the entry, while the transoms and clerestory windows usher in more daylight into interior offices.

Beyond the offices, the Elk Room—with art depicting Utah's state animal—serves as a conference room for its day job, moonlighting as a rentable event space, much like the 200-seat North Conference Center and the belle of the interior ball: the State Room.

Not to be confused with the fantastic downtown music venue further south, the State Room within the NCB is awesome in its own right, sitting regally on the second floor just past the landing from the stairs. The classical architecture made its way inside with the gold flower pattern frieze placed between the white painted wood cornice above and the Sapele wood picture rail below. The Sapele wood chair rail keeps playing the classics, and the custom black-and-white wool carpet deliver both longevity and simple luxury while expanding the flower-motif frieze, creating an elevated feel. Gold faux-velvet curtains and valence within the State Room frame an incredible view out to the central plaza, which has its own construction stories to tell.

Delivering More than a Building

The cost of such a building may be staggering, but what the project team delivered is so much more than a government facility, but a missing piece to round out plans made decades before.

Leavitt mentioned how the new central plaza closely resembles the previous one, but reinvigorated and reimagined to be more water-conscious—less grass, more trees, and more water-wise plantings that will make the area a shade haven in the coming years. The reflecting pool and fountain in the middle provide a visual link between the plaza and the nearby buildings as legislators, aides, and others travel across the various pathways.

The new north plaza is another piece of the master plan puzzle. Leavitt said the historic cherry trees that line the Memorial Walkway encircling Capitol Hill—trees gifted to the state by Japan after World War II—created a boundary for the north parking garage layout. Shoring went in to buttress the roots during construction while an arborist continually monitored tree health. Nature and the built environment combine brilliantly with the Sardinian granite-clad belvedere anchoring the top of the north-south axis of campus and delivering a stellar view of the north face of the NCB and plaza below.

Leavitt offered a fitting conclusion to what the Utah State Capitol Complex received with its latest build—the NCB simply belongs there. The Italian granite conceals a highly sophisticated, modern envelope and structure that meet and exceed the State of Utah's High Performance Building Standard.

More important than efficiency is the NCB's timelessness—which stuck out to the VCBO team in early stakeholder conversations.

"They would tell us that this building is to last for 100 years, something we don't typically hear from our clients," Leavitt said. Materials, coatings, and systems were chosen to meet that request, much as the building met the classical, noteworthy, and awe-inspiring design standards set by the Capitol over a century ago.

Leavitt continued: "But above all, the design team recognized that a building that is truly beloved is one that will stand the test of time."

As Paul exhorted the Corinthians nearly two thousand years ago, the North Capitol Building exhorts those looking for architectural splendor today: come witness a classic. ■

(photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photografx)

North Capitol Building

Location: Utah State Capitol Complex
Construction Start - Completion: August 2022 - January 2026
Total Cost: $320 million
Delivery Method: CM/GC
Stories/Levels: 5 (including basement) + mechanical penthouse
Square Footage: (across three buildings)
North Capitol Building—159,935 SF
North Parking Garage—138,700 SF
Central Parking Garage—84,700 SF
Owner: State of Utah DFCM, Capitol Preservation Board
Owner's Rep: Jeff Wrigley (DFCM)

Design Team
Architect: VCBO Architecture
Civil Engineer: Bowen Collins & Associates
Electrical Engineer: Lynk Engineers
Mechanical Engineer: Lynk Engineers
Structural Engineer: Reaveley Engineers
Geotechnical Engineer: GSH Geotechnical
Historic Design Consultant: Schooley Caldwell
Interior Designer: VCBO Architecture
Landscape Architect: MGB+A

Construction Team
General Contractor: Okland Construction
Concrete: Okland Construction
Plumbing/HVAC: J&S Mechanical (North Capitol Building); KHI Mechanical (North Parking Garage); AMCI Mechanical (Central Parking Garage)
Electrical: Rydalch Electric
Drywall: CSI Drywall
Painting: Pacific Painting and Wallcovering, Tony T Painting
Tile/Stone: KEPCO+ (exterior building stone); Global Stone (interior building stone, site pavers)
Millwork: Granite Mill
Flooring: DFS Flooring
Roofing: Utah Tile & Roofing
Glazing/Curtain Wall: Steel Encounters
Waterproofing: Waterproofing West, Utah Tile & Roofing
Steel Fabrication/Erection: Sanpete Steel (building); Amfab Steel (belvedere)
Excavation: Reynolds Excavation
Landscaping: Sinc Constructors
Demolition: Grant Mackay Demolition

SWAN SONG

Karen Ferguson retires after pouring her soul into the North Capitol Building.

By Bradley Fullmer

After an impressive 28-year career with Salt Lake-based VCBO Architecture, Associate Principal Karen Ferguson is retiring, concluding a distinguished career defined by technical excellence, thoughtful leadership, and an unwavering commitment to quality. Since joining the firm, Ferguson has helped shape projects across Utah's government, healthcare, higher education, and sports and recreation sectors, earning a reputation as one of the firm's most trusted architects and project leaders.

Known for her diligence, collaborative approach, and encyclopedic knowledge of building codes, Ferguson became the go-to person that colleagues sought out when projects encountered technical challenges or complex code questions.

"I saw people go to her all the time with code questions because they trusted her knowledge and experience," said Sean Arnold, a VCBO Architect.

Among Ferguson's most significant professional accomplishments was her decades-long work on the Utah State Capitol campus. She started in 2002 as Project Manager for the Capitol Restoration and Seismic Base Isolation Project, helping oversee one of the most ambitious historic preservation efforts in Utah's history. The project required an extraordinary balance of preserving the Capitol's historic architecture while modernizing every major building system and protecting the structure through a state-of-the-art seismic retrofit.

Following the Capitol's reopening in 2008, Ferguson remained VCBO's lead architect and Project Manager on Capitol Hill, overseeing ongoing Capitol Complex improvements, preservation projects, and development of the North Capitol Building. Over more than two decades, she became one of the firm's foremost experts on the Capitol campus, its buildings, and its long-term stewardship.

Dana Jones, Executive Director of the Capitol Preservation Board, said Karen "poured her heart, and her dimples," into both the work and the people of Capitol Hill, leaving a lasting impact on those who work there and who come to enjoy the buildings and grounds.

Ferguson had key roles on other notable projects, including the Westminster University Historic Garfield School renovation, Logan Regional Hospital and Budge Clinic, Alta View Hospital Campus Reconfiguration, and, most recently, the University of Utah's Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation.

While her project portfolio is impressive, those who worked alongside Ferguson say her greatest impact happened behind the scenes. She possessed an exceptional ability to identify issues others overlooked, navigate complicated coordination challenges, and find practical solutions before problems reached the jobsite. Her meticulous attention to detail, calm demeanor, and sound judgment earned the confidence of clients, consultants, contractors, and coworkers alike.

VCBO Principal Brent Tippets believes Ferguson's greatest contribution may have been her willingness to mentor others.

"Sharing her knowledge of the building codes is, for me, her most notable mentoring talent," he said.

Ferguson followed a very non-traditional path to becoming an architect. A native of Laramie, Wyoming, she became disenchanted with a job in healthcare and decided to pursue architecture.

"I was working in the medical field and didn't like the way insurance companies got to decide patient care, not doctors and families," she recalled. "It distressed me that we had to put people through procedures to meet insurance requirements when you already knew they were a terminal patient. I decided I had to do something different, and I'd always been interested in architecture."

She enrolled at Florida A&M, a historically black college (HBCU) and relished the experience. "I was in the 20% minority, which was a lot of fun—I really enjoyed it."

She ultimately graduated from Clemson University with a Bachelor of Architecture, saying of the experience: "I was an older student [in my early 30s]—I didn't go back to school until my kids were in school. Literally, there were classes I had with people half my age."

Ferguson joined VCBO in 1998, and progressed to the level of Associate in 2005, before being promoted to Associate Principal in 2024.

Beyond project work, Ferguson helped strengthen VCBO through her commitment to quality control, coordination, and mentoring younger architects. She was actively engaged with the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the International Code Council (ICC), and the AIA Utah Building Envelope Council. In 2023, she was recognized as Architect of the Year by Women in Architecture Salt Lake City.

She takes with her loads of memories from key projects, clients, and the people at VCBO she associated closely with over three decades.

Her unwavering commitment to her profession is evident in delaying her retirement to work on the North Capitol Building, a fitting swan song to her career.

"That's why I delayed my retirement," she said. "I actually turned 70 this year, but when they finally decided to pull the trigger, I thought, 'Oh no, I'm not retiring. If we get the job, I'm on it!' I started working on it in 2018, and I've been working on it ever since." ■

Samantha Morris of VCBO contributed to this article.

CREATING A FIRST

Utah's first state history museum is a collaboration, coordination, and execution marvel befitting the Beehive State.

By Taylor Larsen

(photo by Alan Blakely Architectural Photography; courtesy ajc architects)

What do you do with years of design notes, decades of best practices in museum architecture, and the resources and willingness to create a home for the Beehive State's massive collection of artifacts, artwork, and memorabilia?

You create the Museum of Utah.

Plans for a State History Museum

For Heber Slabbert, ajc architects Principal in Charge of the project, creating Utah's first history museum began with a study in 2018. But as that study ended, plans for the North Capitol Building (NCB) coalesced; former Utah Speaker of the House Brad Wilson recommended that the state history museum be included there to create a synergy—the people's house and a museum for the people.

VCBO Architecture and ajc architects formed a joint partnership: VCBO would design the NCB's core, shell, and state offices; ajc would design the museum, underground collections, and museum offices.

As museum design moved forward, Slabbert smiled recounting those early conversations, remembering when stakeholders asked: "Would it be crazy if we put the collections in the basement?"

"It would be a dream," he and the ajc team said. With no external temperature concerns, no UV light coming in, and the benefits of the NCB's seismic isolation system, Slabbert continued, "It would be a far better place to put those archives."

Design Team Takes Shape

Designing Utah's first state history museum started from the bottom—underground collections—and the biggest point of pride for Slabbert and Chris Hall, ajc Associate and Project Manager.

"The whole basement collections space is a concrete vault," said Slabbert of the 14 inches of concrete, give or take, encompassing the basement shell.

Protected from the elements? Not fully.

"With collections, water is our number one enemy," Slabbert added. "That means no floor boxes or floor drains on the slab above, because if the fire sprinklers go off and seep over to the collections, we're a swimming pool of water."

Pipes and drainage were routed through the elevator core, but the water conundrum wouldn't be fully solved until designers had created a collections-specific fire suppression system that wouldn't jeopardize irreplaceable history.

One portion of fire mitigation comes via the installed VESDA fire detection system—"crazy science", according to Slabbert: "It's basically a series of 'sniffers' that use lasers to spot microscopic smoke particles, detecting a pre-combustion event in a range of 10 minutes to several hours before flames start and can warn us [where it is] to get to that area and find it."

Sniffing out a fire hours before it occurs? Crazy science indeed.

The sprinkler system itself—a two-stage preaction system—is dry within the collections vault within the overall building's wet system. If a collections sprinkler detects enough heat in a certain zone, water moves to fill the pipes in preparation. Passing another temperature threshold pushes the sprinkler into action, but only in that zone.

Another damage mitigation system came via collaboration with archive storage specialists at Wisconsin-based Spacesaver. Chris Hall, ajc Associate and Project Manager, noted that the team procured the fabricator's largest ever Low-Profile Mobile Shelving order, where gutters atop the shelving can channel sprinkler water away. Special collections within the vault are further protected by Spacesaver's gasketed, enclosed cabinets.

"Spacesaver worked with collections team and our team to find spots for every single object in the collections in those racks," he said, noting how years of planning benefitted from timing— the collections team was documenting the archives as it prepared to move to a new home.

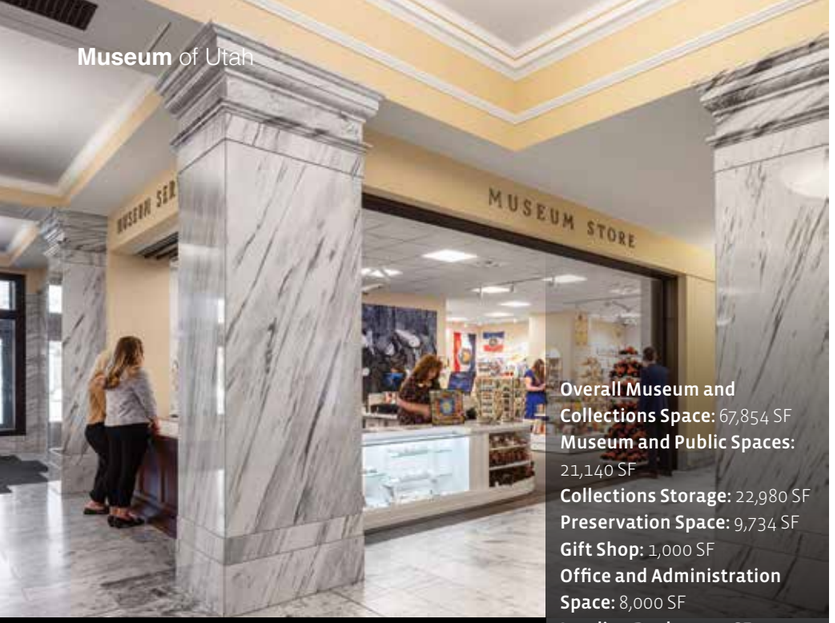
Hall said archive safety coordination went beyond water and fire to meet exact tolerances and tight controls throughout—temperatures between 55°F and 65°F and relative humidity between 25 and 35%.

The Museum of Utah is replete with historic artifacts like a canoe and pioneer handcart that shaped Utah (middle left and right). Others, like the "Mormon Meteor" (bottom), showcase history that put Utah on the map. (top photo by Alan Blakely Architectural Photography, courtesy ajc architects; middle and bottom photos by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photografx)

What else did designers plan for? Floor drains contain special caps to keep bug invaders out; a walk-in processing freezer can dip to -30°C to freeze out bugs hiding in history; a cold storage within the racks stays at 45°F to keep nitrate films from spontaneous combustion; 16-foot ceilings allow collections to grow vertically; and lighting was calibrated to minimize heat gain. "Nothing went unconsidered," said Hall.

Essential to these efforts was ajc's de-facto case study to determine what would benefit the Museum of Utah most.

"We benefitted from years of past››



Overall Museum and Collections Space: 67,854 SF
Museum and Public Spaces: 21,140 SF
Collections Storage: 22,980 SF
Preservation Space: 9,734 SF
Gift Shop: 1,000 SF
Office and Administration Space: 8,000 SF
Loading Dock: 2,000 SF
Education Spaces: 3,000 SF

The Museum of Utah and its five exhibits reside within the North Capitol Building. (top photo by Cody Brown, courtesy VCBO; bottom photos by Alan Blakely Architectural Photography, courtesy ajc architects)

collections and other preservation groups letting us tour their collections and go through their notes; their operations," Slabbert said of the nationwide tour, a smile growing. "I think [those other museums] are jealous of what we have now in Utah."

A Museum to Behold

Collections were just one part of what makes the Museum of Utah so special. Since the Capitol Master Plan dictated that the NCB couldn't be taller than the Capitol—dome be damned—Hall said the team worked magic within the constraints to fit building systems on the first floor ceilings above.

"A round of applause for Okland there," said Hall. The collaboration with the general contractor delivered an impressive amount of technology and building systems in the 38 inches above the UNISTRUT grid ceiling system and still prioritized maintenance access and allowing the exhibitions to star in the 11 feet of space below.

Keep those hands together for the multi-year effort from those in the Utah Historical Society to canvass the state, working with dozens of local museums, curators, community organizations, historical societies, and others to capture what was most important to feature from Utah history.

The ajc representatives said Virginia-based exhibit design and interpretive planners from The Design Minds helped to bring out the best in Utah history. "We've worked with them on several museums," Slabbert said regarding previous Utah-based projects—Fremont Indian State Park Museum Renovation in Sevier County; Golden Spike Visitor Center Renovation in Promontory. Added Slabbert, "They are a very sophisticated design team."

Fellow Virginia-based company Capitol Museum Services received praise for its detailed fabrication work that brings 900 objects to life across the museum's four permanent galleries—"Building Utah", "Inspiring Utah", "Becoming Utah", and "Connecting Utah"—and one temporary exhibit.

The exhibits are a fascinating glimpse through Utah history, and I do mean glimpse, as Tim Glenn, Museum of Utah Director, and Jennifer Ortiz, Director of the Utah Historical Society, said during the tour that the museum covers Utah history broadly, but acts as a teaser to guide interested visitors to learn more from partner organizations.

But even a glimpse can be so revealing and awesome. Objects like pioneer handcarts, the Mormon Meteor, ornate beadwork from Native American tribes, and even attire from rural Utah rodeo queens shine a lovely spotlight on what has made Utah great.

Ortiz said the museum is meant to reflect the entire state: "Hopefully, everyone will have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in here."

The A/E/C industry is certainly reflected in "Building Utah"—a metal planer brought over by Swedish carpenter Hans Lofquist in the 1890s and an Okland hard-hat are on full display.

As ajc and their teammates benefitted from understanding previous museum designs and builds, Hall and Slabbert said their hope is to share what's possible with others and pay it forward. ■

Museum of Utah

Owner: Capitol Preservation Board, State of Utah DFCM
Architect of Record: VCBO Architecture
Architect - Museum & Collections: ajc architects
Historic Design Consultant: Schooley Caldwell
Civil Engineer: Bowen Collins & Associates
Structural Engineer: Reaveley Engineers
Mechanical Engineer: Lynk Engineers
Electrical Engineer: Lynk Engineers
Exhibit Design: The Design Minds
Exhibit Fabrication: Capitol Museum Services
Video Production: RLMG
General Contractor: Okland Construction

Q&A w/ Tracy Stocking

UC+D sits down with Founder/President Emeritus of Salt Lake-based TSA Architects as the firm pivots to its next generation of leaders while celebrating 30 years since its inception.

It's a brave new world for Salt Lake-based TSA Architects, as the firm celebrates its 30th anniversary while transitioning to a new wave of leadership, which reflects both the strength of its practice and the firm's commitment as one of the leading healthcare designers in the Intermountain region.

After decades of dedicated leadership, TSA Founder Tracy Stocking is stepping down from his role as President. Stocking, 66, will remain engaged as Senior Architect and President Emeritus, continuing to lend his wisdom and steady guidance to the team and its clients.

TSA will be led by:

- Nathan Murray, AIA, has been named President in addition to his role as Design Principal. Murray has long exemplified great vision, clarity, and empathy; his leadership champions empowerment, collaboration, and bringing out the best ideas to fulfill the firm's mission: "Making Place for the Human Spirit."
- Doug Banks, AIA, has been promoted to Vice President and Managing Principal. His operational prowess, reliability, and commitment to quality help ensure an effective, thoughtful and client-focused practice.
- Jessica Petersen has been elevated to Associate and Director of Finance. Her diligence, integrity, and profound understanding of the firm's business operations provide a strong and personable foundation for its continued stability and growth.
- Marnie Jacobsen, AIA, becomes Associate and Director of Human Resources. As a natural mentor and champion of team success in both project delivery and client experience, she brings a calm, disciplined, and service-oriented approach to design and project leadership.
- Mark Sabouri, AIA, has been promoted to Associate and Director of Business Development. continuing his innate capacity as a connector and collaborator. Sabouri's approachable leadership style and his innate capacity as a connector and collaborator ensures that the best teams and efforts are brought to bear in the firm's work.

Stocking shared the following message: "Our firm's success has always come from the strength of its people—their integrity, creativity and commitment to those we serve. This new leadership team reflects those values in every way. I have complete confidence in Nathan, Doug, Jessica, Marnie, and Mark as they guide TSA Architects into its next chapter. They bring a powerful blend of experience, heart and vision, and I am proud to support them as they carry our mission forward."

Brad Fullmer sat down with Stocking for an exclusive *UC+D* interview.

UC+D: *Tell me about your transition to President Emeritus and Nathan taking over. What does it mean for you?*

Stocking: I sold my ownership in January 2026, so I have zero ownership now. Nathan already had a large share, so he didn't buy more. Doug increased his share, and then Jessica, Marnie, and Mark each bought into the firm as well. So now there are five owners.

I didn't really script what came next. We had buy-sell agreements in place, and once I decided last fall that it was time to make a change, I told Nathan and Doug they needed to buy me out and take it from there. What happened after that was up to them. They decided to bring in the next three owners; that was entirely their call.

Jessica has been our Business Manager for more than 25 years and has helped carry us through everything—COVID, the Great Recession, and my cancer. Marnie has been here eight years as a Project Architect/Project Manager. Mark has been here three years and is newer, but terrific.

Nathan has also been very intentional about pushing the younger owners to solve problems themselves instead of coming to me for everything. That's an important part of the transition. I'm still here if they need perspective or experience, but they're running the show now. Hopefully, after all these years, they've absorbed some of the culture that mattered most to me.

UC+D: *Five years ago, we did a formal interview for TSA's 25th anniversary. Now the firm is at 30. Beyond the leadership transition, what has changed in the industry? And is your firm still primarily focused on healthcare?*

Stocking: We are still primarily healthcare, and that continues to be our core. We'd like to broaden a little, but not much. Our adjacent sectors are senior care and research labs, both of which relate closely to healthcare.

With senior care, we've always stayed closer to the healthcare side than the multifamily side. We've done assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing, and rehab, but not the apartment-style senior living product. We've probably done 30 or 40 projects in that space, compared with roughly 600 healthcare projects overall.

What's changed in the past five years is that the senior care market has softened, at least in Utah. A lot of people assumed it would keep expanding as baby boomers aged, but that hasn't fully materialized here. People are staying healthier longer, and, culturally, Utah families tend to care for parents at home more than in some other places.

That said, we've been fortunate to work on some marquee projects, including Rocky Mountain Care in Heber, Meadow Peak at Summit Vista with Gardner Company, and the new State Veterans Home, which will replace the current facility near the University of Utah.

In healthcare, the biggest shift is that the big projects keep getting bigger, which means smaller firms like ours compete for fewer of them. At the same time, competition has intensified. National firms are much more active here now, and even smaller firms are getting into healthcare work. Years ago, the same handful of firms would show up to every pre-proposal meeting. That's no longer the case.

UC+D: *So, competition has really ratcheted up?*

Stocking: It has. We may not love that, but competition is supposed to keep you sharp.

UC+D: *What does your role look like now? Are you functioning more like a senior project manager?*

Stocking: That's basically right. I'm still working full time, but now that means more like 40 hours a week instead of 60. I'll stay in this role through the rest of the year, helping with mentorship, transition, and client handoff.
Historically, I've held many of the firm's client relationships, so one of my biggest responsibilities now is helping clients get comfortable with the next generation of leadership. That handoff is critical. Clients need to know there is still someone here they can trust. Beyond that, I'm serving as a senior advisor to the team.

UC+D: *What gives you the most satisfaction about what TSA is today, 30 years in?*

Stocking: I think we've stayed true to the original vision of doing mission-driven work for important clients.

Healthcare is obviously central to that, but research labs are as well, especially our work for the University of Utah. Across healthcare, senior care, and academic research, I love that the work serves a larger purpose. We're a small part of it, but it matters.

I've often said our job is to help people smarter than us do their work. We design environments for doctors, researchers, surgeons, and scientists so they can do what they do at the highest level. There's a real sense of mission in that.

UC+D: *What kinds of work were you doing when you first started out?*

Stocking: Anything I could get.
I grew up in construction and started out building and remodeling homes. I had a little construction company called Custom Conversions after I came home from my mission in 1982. I started it in 1983 and pretty well ran it into the ground by 1985, which was a tough economic period.

That eventually pushed me back toward architecture, which had really been the goal all along. I went to the University of Utah, worked for FFKR, then Babcock Design, and later DMJM. Those experiences gave me exposure to very different kinds of practice—from small, design-focused work to large, bureaucratic firms.

The day I got licensed in 1993, I gave notice and went out on my own. TSA followed in 1995, though there was a period before that when I was working partly on my own and partly with John Pace. For a while we were Pace Stocking, but eventually it became clear we were headed in different directions, so I launched Tracy Stocking and Associates.

In those early years I would take almost anything—residential work, tenant improvements, mall projects, AT&T Wireless stores, whatever helped build the business. I used to say I'd rather design a bathroom under my own flag than something glamorous for somebody else. At that stage, building the practice mattered more than prestige.

UC+D: *How did you move from that kind of general work into institutional and healthcare projects?*

Stocking: A lot of it came down to relationships and timing. I got an LDS Church project through a friend of my dad's, and that eventually turned into around 200 projects for the Church, mostly remodels and seismic upgrades along the Wasatch Front. That work taught me the value of the institutional client—steady work, long-term relationships, and a strong emphasis on doing things right.

Then, a part-time drafter who worked for me happened to play softball with someone at University Hospital and made an introduction. That's how I got into healthcare. That was probably around 1997, and it grew from there. Since then, we've done hundreds of projects for University Health and many more on the University of Utah campus, including research labs and hospital remodels.

UC+D: *We talked about this years ago, but how did your cancer experience affect the way you think about healthcare design?*

Stocking: It made it personal in a way it hadn't been before. Before that, healthcare was a smart business sector. It was stable, growing, and meaningful. But after spending 40 or 50 days and nights in the hospital during treatment, I began seeing healthcare design through the eyes of the patient.

I spent long stretches as an inpatient during chemotherapy, and when you're lying in a hospital room for days at a time, you notice everything—noise in the hallway, the gap under the door, the disruption at night—all the small things that affect comfort, dignity, and healing. That experience made me much more aware of how architecture can support or undermine the patient experience.»

What was interesting is that when Nathan joined the firm a few years later, he already had a deep commitment to patient-centered care. He came out of major healthcare work at firms like Architectural Nexus and Anshen + Allen, so there was a natural alignment there. My personal experience and his professional focus came together in a meaningful way.

UCD: *How did Nathan come into the picture?*

Stocking: We first got to know each other through an AIA Utah healthcare knowledge group. It was basically a small community of architects working in that sector.

Later, after the recession [...] Nathan called to say he'd been laid off and asked if I had any ideas. We talked, and it made sense for us to join forces. He came in around 2012. A year or two later, Doug came over as well. Both had been shareholders at their previous firms and brought deep healthcare experience.

Nathan is very design oriented. Doug is highly technical. I'm more on the people and relationship side. That mix has really been part of the firm's strength.

UCD: *What comes after this year?*

Stocking: I'm not planning to stop working. I'm planning to go back to a smaller private practice model—working from home, taking on smaller projects, and being more selective about the work and the clients. What I realized last summer is that I still love architecture and buildings. What I was ready to step away from was the managing, the stress, and the responsibility that come with running a firm. That's what I wanted to retire from—not the work itself.

UCD: *Last question: is it better to be a great designer or a great people person?*

Stocking: I'm the people person. I'm not a great designer, and I've made peace with that.

I think it's rare for one person to do everything well. The real key is building the right team. I needed someone like Nathan, and he needed someone like me. Then Doug added another important dimension on the technical side. Together, that balance works.

Because in the end, it all matters. You need design, you need technical performance, and you need the ability to communicate and build trust. In a market like Salt Lake, you can't survive long with a weak link. Everyone notices when buildings fail.

That's one of the big lessons institutional work teaches you. Whether you're working for the Church, Utah DFCM, a school district, or the University of Utah, you have to get the details right, the materials right, and the design right. You need form and function. And if you do the important things well, clients will usually give you grace on the smaller mistakes. But the fundamentals have to be there. ■

Tracy Stocking Associates Top Projects

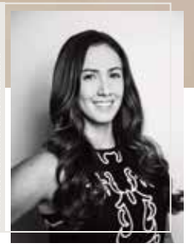
Project	Location	Year Completed
Tuacahn Center for Performing Arts Master Plan	Ivins	1995
Telegraph Marketplace	Washington	2000
Allison Residence	Alta	2002
McKay-Dee Hospital - Specialty Clinics	Ogden	2010
Jordan Valley Cancer Center	West Jordan	2015
Prime Insurance Headquarters	Sandy	2015
Rocky Mountain Care	Heber City	2018
University of Utah Hospital Radiology Infill	Salt Lake City	2020
VA Medical Center Emergency Department	Salt Lake City	2026
Utah State Veterans Home	Taylorsville	2026

Creating Dynamic, Comfortable Workspaces

(photo courtesy HB Workplaces)

roundtable participants

Brit Badger, VP of Sales and Business Development, HB Workplaces



Amanda Jones, Design Director, Midwest Commercial Interiors

(photo courtesy Midwest Commercial Interiors)

Mark Larsen, Chief Operating Officer, CCG

Ben Jenkinson, Account Manager, Workspace Elements

Aaron Harden, General Manager, Interior Solutions

Emily Gretsky, Sr. Business Development Executive, Haworth

Sadie Romney, Business Development Manager, Allsteel

Commercial furniture dealers and manufacturers continue to adapt to ever-changing market conditions.

By Milt Harrison

The commercial furniture industry in Utah has experienced one of the most dramatic transitions in its history over the past five years. The COVID-19 pandemic initially brought office furniture sales to a near standstill as companies were forced to embrace remote work. Since 2023, however, the market has stabilized and entered a new phase—not a return to pre-pandemic norms, but an evolution centered on hybrid work, workplace experience, and space flexibility.

For Utah dealers, manufacturers' representatives, designers, and workplace strategists, business is healthy but fundamentally different than it was in 2019.

Utah Construction + Design held a roundtable on July 9 with the Beehive State's top five commercial furniture dealers, in addition to two local major manufacturer representatives. Each said the industry as a whole is solid, while lamenting various headwinds and significant changes that pose challenges on myriad fronts. By and large, the group expressed optimism for the future in a market that will continue to thrive as the 2030s come closer into view.

"An obvious [concern] is that there's not a lot of office development," said Mark Larsen, COO for Salt Lake-based CCG. "There are some corporate projects, but overall, there is a lack of new office space. Companies are also working existing furniture into new deals—we're reconfiguring spaces or doing 10% to 20% of what previously would have been a 100% furniture package. They're two of my biggest concerns and I don't see that changing anytime soon."

Emily Gretsky, Sr. Business Development Executive in Salt Lake City for manufacturer Haworth echoed the sentiment. "Utah is exciting, there's a lot of growth and development," she said. Outsiders may look at Utah and see the many cranes and busy job sites dotting the state, "but many decisions are happening outside our market. […] a much smaller percentage of the [furniture] decisions are being made locally. Global accounts, acquisitions, and company consolidations all play into that. Depending on who acquired whom, one furniture standard survives while another disappears."

Aaron Harden, General Manager for Salt Lake-based Interior Solutions, said post-Covid furniture costs have skyrocketed, leading clients to be more cautious with budgets.

"Factors like Covid, inflation, tariffs, and the uncertainty with the Middle East has increased pricing significantly," he said. These rising costs, year-over-year, are a main factor influencing client decisions to scale back or repurpose existing furniture.

"A legacy client will look at keeping their standard going, and then they get pricing and decide to go in another direction," Harden continued. "Maybe they open it up to other options and inquire about other lines. Prices have just increased dramatically from prices three to five years ago."

All of these factors mean the market has grown increasingly competitive over a smaller number of projects.

"Another challenge is being competitive. We're all thinking about diversification; how to get into other markets," said Harden. But that comes with its own pitfalls. "As you get into other markets, it's a whole different competitive set and a different decision-making process."

Utah Market Overview

Utah's commercial furniture industry is closely tied to a handful of primary vertical building markets, including:

- Office construction and tenant improvements (TIs)
- Corporate relocations and new headquarters
- Healthcare facilities
- Higher education
- Government/municipal projects
- Technology companies
- Industrial office space
- Hospitality and mixed-use developments

Research from commercial real estate brokers at Cushman & Wakefield noted that new office development in Salt Lake and ››

(photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photogrfx)

Utah counties has yet to surpass the 10-year rolling average (1.1 million SF) of new product added to the market, with a total of 800,000 SF delivered from 2023 onward. In that same timeframe, 957,000 SF of existing office was removed from the market for multifamily conversion.

But Utah's fundamentals—strong population growth, business expansion, and relatively healthy commercial development—seem to be appearing in the tenant improvement market. That office sector has remained comparatively strong as companies renovate existing space instead of building entirely new offices.

Companies are also cutting costs where applicable, with commercial furniture often being one of the first things to be scaled back or eliminated altogether.

"We've got an awesome economy, but our clients are extremely price sensitive," said Brit Badger, VP of Sales/Business Development for Draper-based HB Workplaces. "We'll meet them, tour their facilities, and ask what their three most important things are. They'll say, 'Quality, warranty, and having a really strong partner'. Then they'll make a decision where those three things are no longer a priority. That's especially challenging for us representing MillerKnoll. We're not the cheapest option in the market—we sell quality, warranty, design legacy, and long-term support—all the things they originally said they valued. Once they make a final decision, suddenly those factors aren't what drive the purchase."

"We're seeing a significant increase in workplace reconfigurations," said Amanda Jones, Design Director at Salt Lake City-based Midwest Commercial Interiors. "Organizations are adapting their spaces to meet changing needs, whether that means accommodating growth, downsizing, or integrating existing furniture with new products. Our role is to help clients create a cohesive, functional environment while maximizing the value of their current assets. While these projects may involve furnishing only a portion of a space, they require more planning, coordination, and design effort than outfitting a completely new office. Our priority is always to deliver the best solution for the client."

Sadie Romney, Business Development Manager in Salt Lake for manufacturer Allsteel, agreed that integrating old and new has become more commonplace. "A client will say they want 75% of it new, but how do we reuse and incorporate all of this other [existing] furniture?" she said. "It becomes a juggling act—how do we make them happy and how do we meet their financial goals while being realistic?"

Major Trends 2021-Present

1. Hybrid Work Has Changed Furniture Specifications

Covid-19 changed the mindset on how companies deal with a workforce that proved it could work remote, forcing executives to give employees more latitude with hybrid work schedules. Hybrid work has permanently changed furniture specifications, and dealers must respond to that change with more flexible interior solutions. Companies are buying fewer traditional workstations and investing more heavily in collaborative environments. Pre-Covid, a typical office furniture budget focused primarily on cubicles, private offices, and individual desks. Today, budgets increasingly emphasize collaboration spaces, lounge seating, team rooms, informal meeting areas, focus rooms, and hospitality-inspired environments.

"Something we've seen in the past was a lot of startups and entrepreneurial type companies that were more exciting and wanting to push the limits a bit more," said Ben Jenkinson, Account Manager for Salt Lake-based Workspace Elements. Where high-tech companies—think those operating within Silicon Slopes—once committed major resources to creating diverse, fun, and flexible spaces as a recruiting tool to draw in top talent, Jenkinson continued, "That isn't happening as much."

"There were firms that wanted to have a slide in their headquarters—big-tech firms driving to compete and be the loudest, the biggest, the craziest, the most fun, the unlimited PTO, the sky is the limit," said Gretsky. "Anything to top their competitor within the tech unicorn sector. That is either all gone, or it's slowed down significantly. It's not being pushed the way it was five, eight, ten years ago."

"Clients are increasingly focused on understanding what makes employees want to come into the office and what contributes to a positive workplace experience," said Jones. "Workplace design trends often move in cycles. After a period of pushing creative boundaries and embracing bold concepts, many organizations are now prioritizing practical, people-centered environments that support productivity, well-being, and long-term flexibility."

2. Flexible Spaces a Must; Hospitality-inspired Spaces Popular

Changing office dynamics mean employers are valuing flexible spaces to adapt to hybrid work schedules and employees who enjoy working in various spaces vs. being confined to one workstation or desk. Community spaces, including individual or small group pods, technology-driven conference rooms, couches, and other ››

comfy seating options, are all in play in modern workplace environments. Height-adjusted workstations have become standard over the past decade, particularly among tech firms, professional services firms, and healthcare organizations. Ergonomics is a driving decision-making factor and considered a must for growing companies who value their employees.

The line between residential and commercial design continues to blur with current workplace interiors emphasizing:

- Softer seating
- Warm wood finishes
- Comfortable lounges
- Coffee-bar environments
- Living room aesthetics
- Wellness spaces

The objective is to create high-quality working environments that encourage hybrid employees to actually want to be in the office vs. staying at home.

"Year over year, the definition of those quality spaces continues to improve; the bar continues to be raised. From a well-being perspective, we're seeing that impact materials and the types of spaces," said Gretsky. "In addition to that, clients are willing to invest in natural materials. We're seeing a huge increase in wood, wood veneer, and things like marble, softer metal finishes, softer edges. I'm really excited about the caliber of spaces we're creating."

"Clients are really starting to think about their space and their furniture as a business strategy," said Jones. "They're cognizant of the impact of interiors and furniture on attracting and retaining talent. They consider how furnishings influence the overall experience of a space. It's exciting to see that trend and I'm hoping that it continues."

Romney said the trend of employers being keyed into the importance of having a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing workplace has been a continuously evolving factor over the past 10-15 years.

"It's getting better and better, where employers and businesses are genuinely concerned about their people, not just ergonomically, but mentally," said Romney. "It's exciting to see how that trend is impacting spaces. Clients continue to place an emphasis on flexibility and being more intentional, creating a more engaging work experience. So, we need to put on our thinking caps and intentionally create furniture packages that support these needs."

"Having multiple uses throughout a space is important," added Jenkinson. "One day, this space is a conference room. The next day, it's a place to take a private phone call. Having that flexibility is very important."

Requests for quiet spaces and acoustic treatments are growing, too.

"Working at home, it's nice and quiet and I don't get distracted," said Badger. "So, we're having more conversations with owners about employee proximity and quiet zones and the factors that go into acoustics."

"In that same vein, the pod booth space is a growing trend," said Larsen. "Employees are looking for that separate space."

Jones said the desire for spaces that»

(photo courtesy Haworth/CCG; by Kyle Aiken)

mirror a residential or hospitality-inspired design is a key trend.

"Cooler tones are definitely on their way out, and warmer tones are in, which is very exciting," she said. "Designs are being driven to have a hospitality or residential feel to them, but with a commercial grade and the warranty that goes with that. We're looking at curves, softer seating, more comfortable, inviting furniture, and bringing in natural elements like wood, stone, and biophilia. Also, organic textures are very in right now. Again, it's all about comfort and the well-being of the people using that space. It's a big trend right now."

"I can't help but think it's not directly influenced from us spending so much time at home," said Romney.

"It definitely is," added Badger. "It's like choosing the comfiest spot to work. Across every vertical market—healthcare, higher ed, all of them—they're all wanting these warm, comfortable, curved edges and all kinds of organic shapes."

Comfort is king, added Gretsky, which directly relates back to when employees worked at home during the pandemic and got used to being comfortable while grinding away at daily tasks.

"I think Covid really gave us a gift in that it helped people be aware of the types of spaces they liked to work in, and where they were intentionally choosing to be," she said. "So, all these physical and emotive elements are becoming drivers, and we have a foundation to build on to create overall better spaces."

3. Sustainability Remains Important to Clients Across the Board

Corporate clients, particularly among tech firms and larger government and municipal clients, continue to value sustainability in regard to interior finishes and furniture. That includes:

- Low VOC emissions
- Recycled materials
- Environmental certifications
- Circular manufacturing programs
- End-of-life recycling options

Top manufacturers such as MillerKnoll, Steelcase, Haworth, Allsteel, and others continue emphasizing environmental certifications as part of the sales process.

"Sustainability has always been a hot topic," said Jenkinson. "In the past, it was more expensive, but it's now becoming more of a standard, and manufacturers have responded to producing more sustainable products. And designers are also more conscious of what they're specifying and making sure that we're using sustainable products."

Badger said local owners and architects are truly interested in sustainability, but cost often trumps the desire to "do the right thing" environmentally, especially within this market.

"Our manufacturers are making a really solid sustainability effort with new products," she said. "But when it comes to the bottom line, are they really going to choose a chair made out of ocean-bound plastics even though it's $85 more?"

"I had an architect recently say to me, 'Prove to me that you can [achieve] this level of sustainability, and give me the list'. And my response was, 'Yes, we can do this,'" added Jenkinson. "They may not be getting [a project] LEED Certified because there is a cost to that, but clients are specifying [sustainable] products that lend themselves to that kind of project."

"It's always interesting to see what an [environmentally conscious] client ends up purchasing, but I love those types of questions," said Badger. "We get to dive in with our manufacturer and find out the materials in products."

Even though clients will choose the less expensive furniture option, Larsen added, manufacturers inherently are making all products more sustainable than even a decade ago.

"When the rubber hits the road, and they really have to buy the chair, are they choosing the more expensive, more sustainable options?" said Larsen. Not as much as he and the other participants would like, he continued, "But I think the entire evolution of manufacturers being more sustainable is super positive and a great move in our industry."

"I feel like [owners] in Utah are a little bit slower to adopt more sustainable practices, but they are coming around, and designers absolutely care," said Jones, adding that manufacturers are creating more sustainable products that are ultimately better for the end user, and better for the environment long-term.

"On the manufacturing side, we all hope [sustainability] is as important to the customer as it should be," said Gretsky, adding that clients rarely, if ever, want to spend considerably more money just because a product is more sustainable. So instead, the manufacturer sets the course. "Haworth has been aiming for zero waste to landfill since 2009—that's been a part of our leading values and a decision the Haworth »

family made. Being privately held, they have a different set of requirements and can make those decisions. Whether that's important to our customers locally or to our dealers, it's a way we can positively make an impact on sustainability."

Market Outlook:
Utah's Economy Still Positive, but Clients Ever Budget Conscientious

Ultimately, the commercial furniture industry has a bright future in Utah, and despite budget-conscious clients and a highly competitive market, the economic outlook is favorable for these dealers and manufacturers.

They will continue to adapt to changing market demands, while offering clients in all vertical markets the very best products possible, ones that are sustainable, that improve physical and mental well-being, and that help create aesthetically pleasing workplace environments.

Overall, the outlook for Utah's commercial furniture market is cautiously optimistic, with the industry perpetually redefining itself. Business has shifted from selling rows of desks to creating workplaces that attract employees, support collaboration, and adapt to changing organizational needs.

Dealers that combine workplace strategy, interior design expertise, technology integration, and project management are positioned to outperform those focused primarily on furniture sales.

Headwinds:

- Office footprints will likely remain smaller than before 2020.
- Hybrid work will continue to influence purchasing decisions.
- Margin pressure and industry consolidation will persist.
- Clients will expect greater flexibility and measurable workplace performance.

Tailwinds:

- Continued population growth.
- Ongoing corporate investment in Utah.
- Strong healthcare and higher education construction pipelines.
- Active tenant improvement and renovation work. ■

The Clyde Way:

A CENTURY OF GIVING A FULL MEASURE

Blast from the past: Beck Street Overpass project from 1954. (opposite) Founder W.W. Clyde in 1957 inspecting a jobsite; Clyde was renowned for his strong work ethic and genuine concern for his employees' well-being. (All photos courtesy Clyde Companies)

As Clyde Companies marks 100 years since the founding of W.W. Clyde & Co. in Springville, past and current leaders reflect on a legacy of excellence and a commitment to always embrace the unparalleled ethics and hard work instilled by those who came before.

By Bradley Fullmer

In 1924, a hard-nosed, no-nonsense 35-year-old named Wilford Woodruff (W.W.) Clyde landed a $150,000 joint-venture contract with James Sumsion to build a new road near the Pequop Mountains west of Wendover, Nevada. Armed with a crew of workers and a "four-up" (four-mule team) that pulled a single Fresno scraper, Clyde oversaw a team that transformed the rugged desert landscape into a successful new road, and, in the process, laid the foundation for a company that has become Clyde Companies—a multi-billion-dollar juggernaut in the heavy civil and highway construction space throughout the Intermountain West.

Clyde served as Superintendent, displaying a willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done. The project proved successful, paving the way for the Springville native to get the ball rolling with W.W. Clyde & Co. in 1926, a company that has transformed the past 100 years into Orem-based Clyde Companies, a multi-faceted company that works in over a dozen states and boasts more than 6,000 employees within eight primary subsidiary companies.

It's unlikely W.W. Clyde could have envisioned a century ago building a company that would evolve into the heavy civil construction behemoth it is today—he simply was going about his business each day to the best of his abilities and instilling values that became the "Clyde Way"—hard work, honesty, integrity, and performing quality work on every job.

In addition to W.W.—who held the title of President—brothers Edward Clyde, and later Harry Clyde, held meaningful leadership roles within the company, with Edward serving as Vice President and Harry installed as Treasurer. Another brother, George Dewey Clyde, was an engineer and public official who was elected Governor of Utah from 1957-65.

"The company has done a good job living our values," said Wilford Clyde, current Chairman of the Board for Clyde Companies, who retired in 2023 after a 45-year career. Wilford shepherded the company during a pivotal time and is viewed favorably within the company and throughout the construction industry as a thoughtful, hard-charging leader who had a huge impact on the firm's growth and in motivating employees to aim high and maximize their talents. "As you grow to 6,000 employees, it's hard to personally influence everyone, but we continue emphasizing our core values through training and communications. Our values are simple—we value people, our word is our bond, we give a full measure, and we ››

> "As you grow to 6,000 employees, it's hard to personally influence everyone, but we continue emphasizing our core values through training and communications. Our values are simple—we value people, our word is our bond, we give a full measure, and we continuously improve."
> **—Wilford Clyde**

continuously improve."

"Overall, I think the company has done an excellent job living up to the principles," added Jeff Clyde, who spent 36 years at W.W. Clyde & Co., including eight years as President (2012-2019), before a final 21-month stint at Clyde Companies. "There are always times when you need to sharpen your focus, but those values are still very much part of who we are. W.W. built his business on a handshake. Obviously, today's world is different, but I was always taught that if we say we're going to do something, we do it."

As Clyde Companies celebrates the 100th Anniversary since the founding of W.W. Clyde & Co., current leaders remain committed to carrying on its incredible legacy.

A Fourth-Generation Company with Diverse Talent Bolstered by Key Acquisitions and Expansions

One hundred years since its inception in Springville, the Clyde family's founding principles continue to define Clyde Companies, the parent company of many thriving companies under its spacious umbrella. In addition to W.W. Clyde & Co., subsidiaries include: Geneva Rock Products; Suncore (formerly Sunroc); Sunpro; Beehive Insurance Agency; Clyde Capital Group; Bridgesource; and Homebuilt.

Together, these firms generate nearly $3 billion in annual revenues. The powerful, high-tech equipment and resources utilized today by these companies bears little resemblance to the mule-powered scraper utilized a century ago, but company leaders insist the culture hasn't changed through multiple generations of leaders.

"Our values have endured because they've been lived, not just talked about," said Jeremy Hafen, President/CEO of Clyde Companies, who has been with the company in various capacities since 2004 and is a son-in-law to Wilford Clyde. "We've inherited something incredibly special, and our responsibility is to make sure we're passing on an even stronger organization to the next generation."

It didn't take long for W.W. Clyde and his brothers to establish the company as one of the premier heavy civil contractors in Utah and surrounding Intermountain states, with expertise in highways, bridges, water infrastructure, mining and reclamation, site development, and sizeable earthmoving projects.

The Clyde brothers began diversifying the company a decade after founding W.W. Clyde & Co., with the acquisition of a small fuel service station in 1937 that evolved into Utah Service and then Utah Valley Industrial Supply.

In 1954, the company recognized Utah's exploding post-war demand for ready-mix concrete and founded Geneva Rock Products. The company quickly expanded its ready-mix operations to include aggregate production, road building, asphalt paving, and utility work, evolving into one of the top two construction materials producers in the Beehive State.

The next company in the Clyde portfolio was Beehive Insurance Agency, founded in 1961 to provide risk management and insurance services both internally, and later to the wider commercial construction market.

The Clyde brothers remained actively engaged in the business through 1960, when they started ceding top executive positions to the next generation. In 1961, W. Cornell Clyde, W.W.'s oldest son, was named President/General Manager, having worked side-by-side his father for 35 years starting at age 12. Cornell led the company's second generation of leaders, which included his brothers, Blaine and Bill, along with cousins Hal and Norman, who were Edward's sons.

Third generation leaders included Cornell's son, Richard, along with Blaine's sons, Paul, Wilford, and Carl. Jeff Clyde is Richard's son, a fourth-generation Clyde who worked during the third-generation era. Other key third generation family members were David Cook, GM/VP of Utah Service (Sunpro), and Ray Gammell, who recently retired as VP of Equipment and Facilities at Clyde Companies.

Paul was a consequential leader in the '80s and '90s, a former President of W.W. Clyde & Co. and later the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Clyde Companies when it was established in 1998. After the devastating 1983 Thistle landslide, Paul notably led the company's emergency reconstruction efforts there.

Carl was a steady, behind-the-scenes leader that served as Vice President of Sand and Gravel at Geneva Rock. He played an essential role in developing critical gravel operations, including pits owned at the Point of the Mountain.

Wilford started his career at Geneva Rock in 1977 and quickly rose up the ranks, becoming President in 1988. When Clyde Companies was created, Wilford was appointed Vice President, then President and CEO from 2001-2017. He led or participated in literally dozens of company acquisitions—over 40—a critical component of its long-term growth strategy. Wilford explained the impetus for the creation of Clyde Companies and the synergy created having all subsidiaries under one organization.

"Before Clyde Companies was formed, each business largely operated independently," he said. "When we created the parent company in 1998, it took a few years to get everything organized. By 2001, we were ready to grow aggressively."

And grow they did, with a penchant for finding stable, like-minded companies within the same industries they operated in and bringing them into the fold.

The first major acquisition came in 1990 with the purchase of Ideal Concrete, followed by J & J Mill and Lumber, and then Quality Concrete in Southern Utah.

"Buying Ideal Concrete was our first major acquisition—it was exciting," recalled Wilford. "That acquisition ultimately positioned us as a leading commercial concrete supplier along the Wasatch Front."

In 1999, Utah Service and related businesses were reorganized as Sunroc Corporation—rebranded last year as Suncore—which has expanded significantly via 20 acquisitions.

W.W. Clyde & Co. has greatly expanded its presence geographically with six major acquisitions in the past decade, primarily under the direction of Dustin Olson, a 28-year veteran who was named President in 2019.

"My role has a lot to do with strategy and making sure we're growing the right way, that our processes and our execution is consistent across the larger organization," said Olson. "We've spent a lot of time on acquisitions."

In Colorado, the company acquired Golden-based Scott Contracting in 2018 and then Englewood-based Interstate Highway Construction (IHC) in 2020—it has operated as W.W. Clyde & Co.–Great Plains Division since 2023.

In Arizona, three companies were purchased: Apache Junction-based Blount Contracting in 2020; Taylor-based Hatch Construction & Paving in 2024; Safford-based CKC Construction & Materials in 2026. The combined firms comprise W.W. Clyde & Co.–Southwest Division, headquartered 40 miles east of downtown Phoenix in Apache Junction.

Under Olson's watch the past eight-plus years, revenues have more than quadrupled to nearly $800 million annually. Olson has led the charge in diversifying W.W. Clyde & Co.'s workload.

"We do more private work than we used to [...] more negotiated work," he said. "Obviously, DOT work is our bread and butter, especially in Utah. We also do a lot of large pipelines, and we've really become one of the west's best bridge builders. It's a good blend of revenue streams. When I took over, about 95% of our revenue was from public work, and now it's about 40% public work. We're trying to lean in to help developers with site work, utilities, and paving."»

W.W. Clyde built the Dirty Devil River Bridge steel arch structure, located northwest of Hite on SR-95 in Garfield County, in 1966.

Aerial view of Desert Color—developed by Clyde Capital Group—a sprawling, ambitious 3,400-acre development in St. George. At full build-out, it will include 11,000 homes/resort units, mixed-use commercial retail districts, hospitality, K-12 schools, and more than 200 acres of parks and trails.

> "We have a saying—'Field-first'—where we lead in a way that improves employee experience and their lives in the field; that they're safer, more productive, and feel like their careers are growing. And whatever their current role is, that they know the path to the next step."
>
> **—Dustin Olson**

Geneva Rock has also reinvented itself in recent years and installed Ryan Dalling as President in 2022. He joined Clyde Companies nine years ago to work in Sunroc's Masonry Division and quickly proved to be a capable leader. He's tasked with streamlining Geneva's operations and boosting productivity in both construction materials and contracting work.

Dalling said the subsidiary has grown from $480 million to more than $700 million since 2020, with estimates of 10% growth by the end of this year.

"When I arrived, one of the primary objectives was improving the profitability of the construction division," he said. "We already had outstanding people, excellent capabilities, and one of the strongest names in the industry. The challenge was making sure we were operating as profitably as we could. Since then, the focus has expanded beyond profitability to long-term growth."

Asphalt production since 2020 has increased from 700,000 tons to more than a million tons annually, while employee numbers have risen from 1,100 to over 1,400.

"What's encouraging is that our revenue has grown even faster than our employee count," said Dalling. "That tells me we're becoming more efficient and getting more out of our people, equipment, and assets."

Geneva Rock provided ready-mix concrete on UTA's Trax project; this section is at 400 South in Salt Lake City.

Sunroc Building Materials was formed in 2009, providing residential and commercial builders with lumber, trusses, windows, doors, and other building products. It rebranded as Sunpro in 2019.

In 2014, the company created Clyde Realty, which became GWC Capital, then rebranded in 2024 as Clyde Capital Group (CCG), as a dedicated real estate investment arm that develops residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties while supporting the broader Clyde portfolio. CCG has developed more than a dozen projects, led by its flagship 3,400-acre Desert Color development in St. George, which will include 11,000 homes/resort units, a 2.5-acre lagoon, mixed-use commercial retail districts, hospitality, K-12, and more than 200 acres of parks and trails at full build out.

In Eagle, Idaho, CCG has been developing Valnova since 2023, a 6,000-acre master-planned community expected to house 7,100 residential units with half the property set aside for open space, parks, trails, recreation areas, and preserved foothills.

Other Utah-based developments are found in Draper, Lehi, Moab, Eden, Provo, Spanish Fork, Orem, St. George, and Washington City.

"Clyde Capital Group has experienced tremendous growth," said Hafen. "Master planned communities like Desert Color and Valnova demonstrate the type of developments we want to continue creating throughout the region."

Bridgesource was founded in 2020 to supply fly ash, fuels, and lubricants across the Intermountain West, part of Clyde's expansion into industrial distribution and sustainable construction materials.

The newest Clyde subsidiary is Homebuilt—a new home improvement experience built for both weekend warriors and seasoned professionals. The first location is slated to open late summer 2027 in Orem.

Bright Future Marked by Ambitious "10-by-10" Goal

Hafen has had a front row seat to Clyde Companies' major revenue milestones in the past dozen years. The company's executive team has some audacious goals over the next decade, including more than tripling current revenues.

"We surpassed our first $1 billion in annual revenue several years ago (2018), reached our second billion in 2021, and we're budgeted to reach $3 billion this year," said Hafen. "The past few years have been a period of hyper-growth, and we've spent much of that time making sure our systems and processes keep pace."

He continued: "We have a strategic goal we call '10-by-10'—reaching $10 billion in revenue over the next 10 years. It sounds ambitious, but if we continue growing at the pace we've achieved over the past decade, it's very attainable."

Wilford said while revenue growth is obviously important, profitability can't be sacrificed just for the sake of posting a big number.

"Jeremy's 10-by-10 plan is ambitious—if they achieve it, the company will be fundamentally different," Wilford remarked. "Growth is important, but profitability matters even more—anybody can chase revenue. The real challenge is growing while remaining profitable. Construction is a challenging business. There will always be someone willing to bid lower. Success comes from being disciplined, maintaining your margins, and making smart decisions."

Jeff said a key consideration in achieving that level of growth is approaching projects on a case-by-case basis and executing them based on common sense principles.

"Construction can become very cookie-cutter," he said. "The only way you consistently win projects is by asking, 'What can we do differently? How can we think outside the box and create an advantage?'"

And while acquisitions and geographic expansions have no doubt fueled growth the past two decades, it's important for the company to stay disciplined and not overreach.

"The two biggest mistakes contractors make are expanding into unfamiliar geographic markets and entering business lines they don't fully understand," said Wilford. "As companies grow, you can't personally oversee everything. You have to trust people and build strong systems of accountability. What gives me confidence in our current leadership team is that they're talented, energetic and disciplined."

Building a Strong Culture: It's All About the People

Hafen said having talented employees within each Clyde subsidiary and empowering them will be the driving factor in the company reaching its goals.

"The thing I enjoy most—and the thing that causes me the most stress—is people," he said. "Putting the right people in the right»

seats is both the most rewarding and the most challenging part of my job. That's what leadership is all about."

With the company's employee count exploding by 50% in the last two years to over 6,000, streamlining training and reinforcing company culture has been paramount.

"We've spent a lot of time developing people and making sure our leaders are ready for their next roles," said Olson. "Culture is a big thing to me—I try to lead the culture as it was taught to me. We have a saying—'Field-first'—where we lead in a way that improves employee experience and their lives in the field; that they're safer, more productive, and feel like their careers are growing. And whatever their current role is, that they know the path to the next step."

> "When we talk about 'The Clyde Way', we're talking about everything that differentiates us in the marketplace. Unlike many companies today that are driven by private equity or exit strategies, we have no interest in selling the business. We want to own it in perpetuity, remain a great corporate citizen, and build something that lasts for generations."
>
> **—Jeremy Hafen**

"If I ever lose sleep over business, it's almost never because of financial issues," said Hafen. "It's usually because of a difficult situation involving people."

Aerial view of Mountain View Corridor in Utah County.

Olson praised both Wilford and Jeff Clyde for their positive influence in helping shape his leadership style.

"Jeff is one of those leaders that you could walk in with really bad news, and he would not lose his mind," Olson said. "It was nice to develop under that kind of personality, because I certainly didn't make every decision perfectly."

"Wilford certainly is a charismatic and amazing leader—he really built Clyde Companies," he added. "If you had a goal that you weren't achieving [...] he was not afraid to have those tough conversations and challenge you to do better."

The leadership style is one that remains from the company's early days.

"My grandfather demanded a great deal from people, but he was also fiercely loyal to them," said Wilford. "He believed in paying good people well, because they were important to the success of the company."

Community Service and Giving Back to the Industry

Clyde executives have long been active, contributing members of industry associations, particularly the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Utah. The company has had nine executives serve as AGC of Utah Chairman of the Board (the title was President prior to 2003), including: W.W. Clyde in 1939; W. Cornell Clyde in 1967; Hal Clyde in 1973; Richard Clyde in 1991; Wilford Clyde in 1999; Paul Clyde in 2003; Al Schellenberg in 2009; Jeff Clyde in 2015; Scott Okelberry in 2021. Olson will be the 10th Clyde executive elected as AGC's top official in 2027.

"AGC of Utah was founded in 1922, and W.W. Clyde started just four years later in 1926. In a very real way, our organizations have grown up together," said Joey Gilbert, President/CEO of AGC of Utah. "For the better part of a century, Clyde has helped build the roads, infrastructure, and communities that have supported Utah's growth and shaped the Intermountain West."

He continued: "Their real legacy is bigger than just projects. Clyde has built a culture around integrity, hard work, and taking care of people. It sounds simple but maintaining that through multiple generations and 100 years of change in our industry is anything but simple."

Gilbert said the company's impact to AGC, and the construction industry as a whole, is second-to-none.

"With Dustin Olson scheduled to serve as Chairman in 2027, Clyde leadership within AGC will span nearly 90 years. To me, that says everything about their commitment to the industry," Gilbert added. "Generation after generation, their people have shown up. They have served on boards and committees, worked through difficult industry issues, helped advocate for contractors, supported workforce development and safety, and taken their turn carrying the responsibility of leading the association. That matters because the best associations are built by companies willing to look beyond their own immediate interests and invest in the health of the entire industry."

Wilford set a high bar regarding service outside the office and being civically engaged in public and social endeavors that benefit communities. Beyond the AGC, Wilford was Chairman of the Utah Valley University Board of Trustees (1999-2000), President of Beavers, Inc., a national heavy civil contractor association (2015), Chairman of the Salt Lake Chamber (2017-18), and most notably, a two-term Mayor of Springville—his beloved hometown (2009-17).

"One of the greatest lessons Wilford taught me was the importance of community involvement," said Hafen. "He was active in associations, chambers, and community organizations, and that helped strengthen the Clyde brand. People see that we aren't just here to make a profit—we want to be good corporate citizens."

Hafen himself is Chair of Salt Lake Chamber and on three prominent boards: the Utah Board of Higher Education, the Salt Lake Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and WCF Insurance.

"These roles are about giving back to the community," he noted. "I'm not sure I would have become involved in so many community organizations had I not watched Wilford lead by example. I'm a CPA by training, so my natural tendency is to stay behind the scenes. Over time, I learned that building a great company takes much more than just understanding the numbers."

"Springville Rising" Project Taking Shape

Two years ago, the company decided it was time to return to its roots, with the plan of moving its corporate headquarters from Orem back to Springville. The new HQ campus will preserve and renovate the historic W.W. Clyde shop at Main Street and 1400 North, and construct a new four-story, 125,000-SF building that will feature significant mass timber elements.

Under the Springville Rising initiative, Clyde Companies has assembled significant property near the site to the north, in addition to the former Allen's Grocery block at 4th South and Main. The north development conceptual plan is a walkable, mixed-use development that will include retail shops, restaurants, multiple housing>>

(left) Point of the Mountain Aqueduct—completed in 2007—was a challenging 12-mile-long culinary water pipeline connecting Little Cottonwood Treatment Plant with Point of the Mountain Water Treatment Plant. (right) Geneva Rock's innovative Point of the Mountain conveyor belt system was built from 2012-14, officially going online in May 2014.

> "There are always times when you need to sharpen your focus, but those values are still very much part of who we are. W.W. built his business on a handshake [...] I was always taught that if we say we're going to do something, we do it."
>
> **—Jeff Clyde**

types, and community gathering spaces.

"Springville Rising grew out of the idea that our mission is building better communities," said Wilford. "That means more than constructing roads and buildings. It means investing in people, creating opportunities, and giving back. Most of our shareholders either grew up in Springville or have deep family roots there. We wanted to bring our headquarters back to where it all started and help strengthen the community. Springville Rising has grown into something much larger than I originally imagined, but the purpose remains the same: making our hometown a better place for future generations."

"We're investing hundreds of millions of dollars into projects that will strengthen the community," added Hafen. "These projects aren't driven primarily by financial returns. If they make money, that's great, but our primary motivation is investing in Springville's future. We hope to recover our capital over time, but this is really about giving back and honoring our roots."

A Well-Earned Legacy

While 100 years is indeed a proud milestone for Clyde Companies, in many ways it's just the beginning of what is expected to be an even brighter future for the multi-faceted company.

Wilford admitted his grandfather likely wouldn't have been as bold and aggressive as recent and current executives have been with the company, but without question he'd be proud of its accomplishments.

"My grandfather might think we're less conservative than he would have been, but I also think he'd recognize that we've been very successful while staying true to the values he established," said Wilford. "One of the greatest accomplishments in our company's history is that we've remained a successful, family-owned business for 100 years while keeping hundreds of family shareholders united—that's extremely unusual."

He continued, "Most of our senior leadership isn't family. They've earned their positions by proving themselves over many years. That's exactly how it should be."

Wilford also praised Hafen for not being satisfied with the status quo.

"Jeremy is an outstanding numbers person. He's collaborative, inclusive, and very intentional about involving his leadership team," he said. "He has a clear vision for where he wants the company to go, and he's willing to make long-term investments that won't necessarily pay off immediately. He's performance oriented, sets high expectations, holds regular one-on-one meetings with his team, and believes in accountability."

Hafen concluded that future company success will continue provided long-time values remain the standard.

"Wilford taught me to keep family ownership intact, avoid burning relationships, and operate with low debt," he said. "That conservative financial philosophy has helped Clyde Companies weather economic cycles for generations, and I believe it will help us remain successful for another hundred years.

"When we talk about 'The Clyde Way', we're talking about everything that differentiates us in the marketplace," Hafen continued. "Unlike many companies today that are driven by private equity or exit strategies, we have no interest in selling the business. We want to own it in perpetuity, remain a great corporate citizen, and build something that lasts for generations." ■

Crews place concrete on the Pioneer Crossing project in Utah County in early 2010; it was a W.W. Clyde/Kiewit joint-venture that opened in August 2010.

> "What's encouraging is that our revenue has grown even faster than our employee count. That tells me we're becoming more efficient and getting more out of our people, equipment, and assets."
>
> **—Ryan Dalling**

W.W. Clyde & Co. Top Projects

Project	Year/Era
Zion National Park Road	1930s
Scofield Dam Reconstruction	1940s
Beck Street Overpass	1950s
Glen Canyon/Page Infrastructure	1960-70s
Thistle Landslide Reconstruction	1983
I-215 Belt Route	1980s
Legacy Parkway	2000s
Olmstead Pipeline	2004
Point of the Mountain Aqueduct	2005-07
Jordanelle Dam Hydro Plant	2006-08
Southern Parkway Phase 4	2009-10
Mountain View Corridor	2012-26
Bangerter Hwy Separations	2018-23
Davis-Weber Water Pipeline	2020s
SLC Int'l Airport Redevelopment	2014-26

Geneva Rock Top Projects

Project	Year/Era
Garfield Smelter Stac	1970s
SLC Int'l Airport Airfield	1980s-Present
I-15 Reconstruction	1997-2001
UTA TRAX Light Rail	1997-Present
Hill AFB Airfield Projects	2007-Present
Porter Rockwell Boulevard	2019-21
WVC 4100 South Reconstruction	2020
SR-92/AF Canyon Rehab	2020
I-84 Morgan-Henefer Rehab	2020-21
Ogden 20th St. Reconstruction	2020-21
Provo Airport Expansion	2023

Clyde Companies Milestones

1926 – W.W. Clyde & Co. founded
1933 – Company Incorporated
1937 – Utah Service founded
1954 – Geneva Rock Products founded
1961 – Beehive Ins. Agency founded
1998 – Clyde Companies, Inc. created
1999 – Sunroc Corporation created
2009 – Sunroc Bldg. Materials created
2014 – GWC Capital created
2019 – Sunroc BM rebranded Sunpro
2020 – Bridgesource founded
2024 – GWC rebranded Clyde Capital
2025 – Sunroc rebranded Suncore
2026 – Groundbreaking of Homebuilt

STATE OF **BUILDING;** STATE OF **PROGRESS**

Architects, engineers, and contractors across Utah are hard at work to deliver transformative community assets that commenced this year. While most of the featured projects are situated in Salt Lake County—plenty is happening in the southwest and mid-valley areas of the county—Southern Utah is also the home to upcoming work that showcases major design, engineering, and construction talent.

renderings/images courtesy project architects

West High School Rebuild

Owner: Salt Lake City School District
Architect: VCBO Architecture
General Contractor: Hughes General Contractors
Estimated Completion: Phase 1 (main school building) in the 2030–31 school year; Phase 2 (athletic fields) in the 2032–2033 school year.

Opened in 1890, West High School in Salt Lake City is Utah's oldest high school. The main building, completed in 1922, has evolved through several additions and renovations, but the campus now faces significant infrastructure limitations, including aging building systems and learning environments that no longer support contemporary educational needs.

The replacement project represents a once-in-a-generation investment in preserving West High's legacy while creating a campus designed to serve future generations. Inspired by the character of West High's historic brick architecture, the new campus will balance respect for the school's heritage with spaces designed for modern teaching and learning, where daylit classrooms and teacher offices will support flexible, collaborative education.

Phase 1 includes the construction of a new academic building and athletic field house across 300 West while students continue learning in the existing school. After students move into the new building, most of the original campus will be removed to make way for Phase 2, which includes new athletic fields west of 300 West, with West High's historic main entrance preserved as a gateway to the future stadium. A sky bridge spanning 300 West will unite the academic and athletic portions of campus, creating a cohesive and secure school environment. ››

Union Row Townhomes

Owner: AUA Midvale Townhomes LLC. (Urban Alfandre and Asilia Investments)
Architect: MiNT Architecture
General Contractor: Bonneville Builders
Estimated Completion Date: Spring 2027

Union Row Townhomes will introduce a contemporary residential community that reflects the evolving nature of suburban living in the Salt Lake Valley. Designed as a build-to-rent townhome development in Midvale, the project emphasizes the balance between private residential space and community connectivity, providing convenient access to regional amenities while maintaining the comfort and scale of a residential neighborhood.

Residential plans focus on functional, open-concept floor plans, efficient use of space, and flexible living environments that accommodate modern lifestyles—remote work, entertaining, and everyday family living. The homes feature clean architectural lines, modern finishes, and thoughtfully organized layouts that promote both comfort and practicality.

From a community design perspective, Union Row Townhomes will extend the living experience beyond the individual residence. The development will integrate a collection of lifestyle-driven amenity spaces—including a resort-style clubhouse, pool and spa, coworking areas, fitness facilities, sports courts, and outdoor gathering spaces—to create a neighborhood-oriented environment that encourages social interaction and active living.

This intentional blending of residential and community-focused spaces will establish a cohesive development that supports residents' daily needs while fostering a strong sense of place.

Spanish Fork Fire Station 61

Owner: Spanish Fork City
Architect: ajc architects
General Contractor: SIRQ Construction
Estimated Completion Date: July 2027

Spanish Fork Fire Station 61 is designed to meet the current needs of the community and accommodate future growth. As the current station was designed decades ago for a volunteer fire crew, it no longer supports the 24/7 operations, safety standards, or emergency response times required today.

The design team is assisting with site selection, program verification, design, construction administration services, and a community outreach initiative to educate residents about the future station's purpose and services.

At completion, the nearly 30,000-SF Fire and EMS Station will contain the following interior spaces and areas: 12 administrative offices with locker rooms, 4 pull-through apparatus bays, medical supply room, decontamination room, PPE room, apparatus tool room, SCBA fill station/compressor room, PPE and dirty utility room, 50-person capacity training room, 14 staff dorms, including offices for the Captain and Battalion Chief, a kitchen, physical fitness room, day room, report writing room, lobby, and a historic Fire and EMS museum area.

Outside, parking areas, curb and gutter, flatwork, storm drainage, landscaping, and site security will combine with the new building to enhance emergency response capabilities, creating a modern, efficient, and resilient new home for Spanish Fork's first responders.

Convergence Hall

Owner: Nucleus Institute under Division of Facilities Construction & Management (DFCM)
Architect: FFKR Architects and Gensler
General Contractor: Layton Construction
Estimated Completion Date: 2029

Innovation does not happen in silos—Utah's greatest breakthroughs in health, energy, defense, and technology have always come from collaboration across sectors, and Convergence Hall will bring together, for the first time, universities, industry, and government under one roof to fuel innovation through cross-sector collaboration.

Convergence Hall aims to create the permanent physical infrastructure for that collaboration to happen at scale. As the first innovation campus of its kind in the state of Utah, this next-generation innovation hub at The Point in Draper will unite research, entrepreneurship, and short-term living to create a connected ecosystem where proximity drives discovery, exchange, and impact. It will be a future base for the Nucleus organization, housing Nucleus Fund, MarketEdge, Nucleus Grow, ProLab, and PolicyLab.

9th Note

Owner: J. Fisher Companies
Architect: THINK Architecture
General Contractor: J. Fisher Construction
Estimated Completion Date: April 2027

Located at the southwest corner of North Temple and 900 West in Salt Lake City, 9th Note is a six-story, mixed-use development designed to provide 110 affordable housing units within the Transit Station Area (TSA) zoning district. The residential portion will consist of 25 one-bedroom and 85 two-bedroom units across five levels of housing above a ground floor that includes 5,000 SF of commercial space.

As the project replaces a used car lot and several one-story retail buildings across three plots and consolidates them into a cohesive site, 9th Note will integrate sustainable and efficient design elements to enhance urban density while maintaining community accessibility. Parking provisions include 50 stalls, four EV stalls, and 12 EV-ready spaces, in alignment with TSA regulations, while proximity to the Jackson/Euclid TRAX station and Folsom Trail supports a transit-oriented design approach. ››

Midvale Public Works Expansion

Owner: Midvale City
Architect: Galloway
General Contractors: Big-D Construction
Estimated Completion Date: June 2028

Midvale Public Works Expansion is a phased, 3.5-acre modernization initiative designed to replace aging, undersized facilities and position Midvale City's Public Works Department for continued community growth. The project will enhance capacity and operational efficiency for the various Midvale City divisions while maintaining uninterrupted day-to-day operations throughout construction.

After demolishing existing buildings, the expansion will include new administration and common areas, a vehicle repair shop, a truck and vehicle wash bay, a wastewater treatment station, covered as well as climate-controlled fleet and equipment storage, salt and bulk-material storage, decant bins, and comprehensive site infrastructure improvements.

By incorporating adjacent acquired property, improving circulation and access from South Main Street, and creating additional usable areas through retaining walls and backfill, the project will deliver a resilient, high-functioning public works campus built to serve Midvale's evolving needs. ››

Sol at Trails East

Owner: Helos Group
Architect: FFKR Architects
General Contractor: SIRQ Construction
Estimated Completion Date: March 202

As part of the 330-acre Trails East development, Sol at Trails East will be a unique desert community centered around a leasing office and "The Post"—a clubhouse designed with exterior stone, steel, and stucco. When combined with the interior lighting and finishes, The Post will evoke the warmth and sense of wonder that one experiences within Southern Utah's awe-inspiring canyons.

The apartments are designed to invite the desertscape into the units, with soft colors, whimsical design, and large open windows. The project respects the desert architecture of the past while infusing it with contemporary design, linking it to the adjacent retail development to create a community abuzz with life and laughter.

Amenities will both engage tenants and unify the community. A two-story fitness room, oasis pool, and spas will inspire wellness; a video game sanctuary, recording rooms, clubhouse, golf simulator, and a kids' room will inspire gathering and entertainment.

The beginning of an incredible community development just minutes from downtown St. George, Sol at Trails East will offer tenants a luxurious and inspiring living environment with 132 apartment units and a vibrant and diverse retail center.

SL County Office Building

Owner: Salt Lake County
Architect: Babcock Design
General Contractor: TBD
Estimated Completion Date: Late 2027

Salt Lake County is officially relocating its primary government center from its decades-old home on 2001 South State Street in Salt Lake City to the "Peace Coliseum"—the former Overstock corporate headquarters building in Midvale.

After a comprehensive internal review that revealed renovation costs for the nearly 40-year-old county government complex would likely exceed $225 million, Salt Lake County leaders opted for a fiscally responsible acquisition of the tech campus project at Brigham Junction that was completed in 2016. The move delivers long-term taxpayer savings that strategically centralizes the county's vital public services into a modernized, "one-stop-shop" campus in the rapidly growing heart of the Salt Lake Valley.

The building will be retrofitted as county staff transition to the new location through 2027, but it contains ample natural light, cafeteria, and modern technological infrastructure, all sited on a campus that includes a number of flexible communal spaces, ample outdoor space, a greenhouse, a daycare facility, and spaces that can be modified to fully serve the public.

Larry H. & Gail Miller Arts Center

Owner: Salt Lake County Arts & Culture
Architect: Method Studio
General Contractor: Layton Construction
Estimated Completion Date: March 2028

The Larry H. & Gail Miller Arts Center fulfills Salt Lake County's goal of expanding their catalogue of performing arts facilities to the southwest valley, with the new Miller Arts Center situated in the growing entertainment district in Daybreak. The facility will help meet persistent demand for a mid-size proscenium theater, and will also include a 100-seat studio black-box theater, a 3,000-SF event hall, public art galleries, classrooms, and County Arts & Culture offices.

Design of the future 94,000-SF Miller Arts Center is expressed as a dynamic, folded form symbolizing the theatrical curtain—draped and pulled back to conceal and reveal the featured programs inside. The metal folds define the threshold between reality and imagination, reflecting the rhythm and expression of the performing and visual arts and invite audiences to immerse themselves into a world of transformation.

Inside, grand monoliths wrapped in porcelain slabs reminiscent of the Great Blue Limestone formations in the nearby Oquirrh Mountains house each of the primary programs. At the heart of it all is the 800-seat proscenium theater, an immersive and intimate experience that will transport audiences once again into a new world of light and wood, where themes and backgrounds can be projected onto every surrounding surface. ››

Zion Shores

Owner: Zion Shores LLC
Architect: AE Urbia
General Contractor: Salt Lake Excavating and Immaculate Homes JV
Estimated Completion Date: Summer 2027

Zion Shores is a one-of-a-kind, private luxury waterfront community in Southern Utah's Washington City built around one of the world's most unique recreational amenities: 12 acres of crystal-clear lagoons, creating an unparalleled waterfront lifestyle in the desert.

While every residence enjoys direct access to these lagoons for swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking, and relaxing just steps from the front door, the community includes only 65 luxury vacation residences—43 homes and 22 townhomes—making ownership exceptionally limited and exclusive.

The heart of the community is an extraordinary surf destination that will attract visitors from around the world. Zion Shores combines three completely different wave experiences in one destination for a diverse inland surf experience: a state-of-the-art PerfectSwell® traveling wave capable of producing customizable ocean-style surf; a dynamic 165-foot continuous river wave; and a 60-foot stationary river wave offering endless rides.

Zion Shores will utilize one of the most advanced water treatment systems ever implemented for a residential lagoon, where a sophisticated network of pumps, filtration equipment, and reverse osmosis technology continuously circulates and refines millions of gallons of water, preserving exceptional clarity and a carefully controlled salt concentration for owners to enjoy an extraordinary waterfront every day of the year.»

The Marlowe

Owner: Bolder Ventures Development, Inc.
Architect: Architecture Belgique, Inc.
General Contractor: Built Contractors / BCC Construction Group, LLC
Estimated Completion Date: Oct 2028

As the final phase of the 42-acre, master planned Jordan Valley Station, The Marlowe is a Class A, market rate apartment development with 408 units situated on 9.69 acres.

The project will provide elevator-served residences finished in a true Class A manner, with features like parcel rooms and dedicated, temperature-controlled food-delivery service locations in each building. Residents will enjoy the advantages of close proximity to the Jordan Valley TRAX station as well as multiple parking options to suit their needs, including individual garages, covered parking, surface parking, and adjacent parking structure options.

The Marlowe will set itself apart by offering a large resort-style amenity center, boasting a luxurious rooftop deck, showcasing the incredible Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain views the site provides, and three additional floors of indoor/outdoor amenities for its residents to enjoy.

Spanish Fork Junior High School

Owner: Nebo School District
Architect: GSBS Architects
General Contractor: Westland Construction
Estimated Completion Date: Summer 2028

The replacement for Spanish Fork Junior High School will establish Nebo School District's next-generation prototype for junior high schools. The approximately 172,000-SF, two-story building is planned to serve about 1,200 total 8th and 9th grade students.

The new building will be built west of the current school, which will remain operational throughout construction. Once the new school is complete, the old structure will be demolished and the site completed and landscaped as part of the final phase of construction. This phased approach will allow students and staff to continue normal school operations throughout construction while minimizing disruption to educational programs.

Beyond replacing an aging facility, the project represents a long-term investment in a flexible, repeatable school design strategy that will help Nebo School District efficiently meet the needs of its student population for years to come. Design is currently underway, with an anticipated groundbreaking occurring in October 2026. Substantial completion is targeted for summer 2028, with final completion expected later that year. ■

2026 Top Utah General Contractor Rankings

Special Thanks to our List Sponsor:

Wheeler CAT

Utah Construction + Design is pleased to publish its annual list of the Top General Contractors in Utah, based on revenues generated in 2025 by firms with offices in Utah. Firms with Utah headquarters are ranked by overall revenues (all U.S. offices). Firms who chose not to disclose revenues (DND) are listed after revenue-disclosing firms based on number of employees. Firms with headquarters outside Utah are listed at the end of the overall rankings, while Utah office revenues are included in the discipline specific Utah rankings. Every effort was made to contact respective GC firms and encourage their participation.

TOP UTAH GENERAL CONTRACTORS (Ranked by Total Office Revenues; Must have Headquarters in Utah; All Disciplines)

	Firm Name Address (HQ) Phone / Website	Year Est. # of Employees (UT/ALL)	Top Executive Title Years at Firm	Largest Utah Project Completed in 2025 Largest Utah Project started in 2026	Annual Revenues (millions) 2025 (Utah offices) (All U.S. offices)	2024	2023	Top Markets	%
1.	**Layton Construction** 9090 Sandy Pkwy Sandy, UT 84070 801-568-9090 laytonconstruction.com	1953 714/2,231	Dave Layton President & CEO 40	Common Spirit Center at Western Sports Park—Farmington Huntsman Cancer Institute, Vineyard Campus—Vineyard	$927.0 **$7,800.0**	$746.0 $4,871.0	$721.0 $3,871.0	Other Healthcare Industrial Higher Ed	32% 13% 11% 9%
2.	**Big-D Construction** 404 W 400 S Salt Lake City, UT 84101 801-415-6000 bigdconstruction.com	1967 900/1,800	Cory Moore CEO 31	Seraph Apartments—Salt Lake City Cal 44 West Industrial—Salt Lake City	$1,606.0 **$3,618.7**	$1,467.9 $2,922.7	$1,206.0 $2,619.6	Data Center Multi-Family Comm/Retail Higher Ed	30% 18% 18% 8%
3.	**Okland Construction** 1978 S W Temple Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-486-0144 okland.com	1918 717/1,263	Brett Okland President 32	North Capital Building—Salt Lake City West Valley Hospital—West Valley City	$1,125.3 **$2,294.0**	$896.4 $1,814.7	$776.7 $1,554.6	Industrial Healthcare Comm/Retail Higher Ed	37% 15% 15% 13%
4.	**Clyde Companies, Inc.** 730 N 1500 W Orem, UT 84057 801-802-6900 clydeinc.com	1926 3,943/6,428	Jeremy Hafen CEO 21	Bangerter Highway South Interchanges— S. Jordan, Riverton, Bluffdale 2100 N—Lehi	$747.0 **$1,390.0**	$542.7 $1,066.3	$560.3 $1,036.7		
5.	**Jacobsen Construction** 5181 W Amelia Earhart Drive Salt Lake City, UT 84116 801-973-0500 jacobsenconstruction.com	1922 853/906	Gary Ellis President & CEO 26	Wavetronix Springs—Springville Salt Palace Convention Ctr. Renovation & Expansion (*JV with AECOM Hunt)—Salt Lake City	$855.0 **$1,020.0**	$990.0 $1,070.0	$935.0 $1,006.0	Religious Higher Ed Multi-Family Healthcare	40% 18% 17% 8%
6.	**Westland Construction** 1411 W 1250 S Orem, UT 84058-2222 801-808-7877 westlandconstruction.com	1992 235/235	Chris Houghton CEO 34	Cyprus High School—Magna West Jordan High School—West Jordan	**$727.4**	$648.9	$577.6	K-12 Religious Healthcare Civic/Inst.	40% 20% 13% 8%
7.	**Staker Parson Mat. & Const.** 2350 S 1900 W Ogden, UT 84401 801-731-1111 stakerparson.com	1952 2,268/3,067	Scott Parson CEO 42	SR-276;SR-95 N Wash To Park & SR-95 MP 34-41 — Hanksville US-191; South Summit—Carbon/Duchesne	$544.7 **$705.0**	$436.6 $589.3	$438.2 $597.9	Highway Other Comm/Retail Civic/Inst.	64% 19% 11% 2%
8.	**Ralph L. Wadsworth Const.** 166 E 14000 S Suite 200 Draper, UT 84020 801-680-5369 wadsco.com	1975 700/1,100	Brandon Squire President 19	Bangerter Highway Design Build—Riverton 2100 North Design Build—Lehi	$633.0 **$693.0**	$480.0 $568.0	$410.0 $453.0	Highway Heavy Civil Wastewater Water	40% 30% 10% 10%
9.	**BHI** 1175 E 2000 S Vernal, UT 84078 435-789-5252 bhico.com	1998 955/1,450	Erik Haslem CEO 18	Green River Solar—Emery Zions Canyon Fiber Optics—Washington & Kane County	$349.1 **$519.7**	$260.6 $606.4	$149.1 $372.8	Industrial Oil & Gas Comm/Retail Higher Ed	40% 30% 10% 5%
10.	**R&O Construction** 933 Wall Ave Ogden, UT 84404 801-414-5155 randoco.com	1980 137/175	Slade Opheikens President & CEO 36	Weber Blackstone Headquarters—Providence Wye Hotel—Park City	$283.5 **$473.0**	$236.5 $463.0	$308.5 $434.0	Comm/Retail Multi-Family Industrial Resort/Hosp.	32% 20% 18% 12%
11.	**Hogan & Associates Const.** 940 N 1250 W Centerville, UT 84014 801-951-7000 hoganconstruction.com	1945 252/252	Cristopher S. Hogan President & CEO 36	West Field High School — Taylor Springville High School Rebuild — Springville	**$435.5**	$504.2	$338.6	K-12 Civic/Inst. Resort/Hosp. Healthcare	80% 8% 3% 2%
12.	**Whitaker Construction Co.** 44 S 1050 W Brigham City, UT 84302 435-723-2921 whitcon.com	1953 668/964	Brett Nielsen President 31	Davis Aqueduct Reach 1 Parallel Pipeline Project- Layton UDOT - Colorado River Trail Gap—Moab	$300.5 **$387.2**	$287.9 $351.7	$272.4 $322.8	Water Highway Wastewater Oil & Gas	40% 24% 22% 14%
13.	**Wadman Corporation** 2920 S 925 W Ogden, UT 84401 801-621-4185 wadman.com	1951 152/152	David Hogan President 29	Spark! Apartments—Salt Lake City South West Temple Hotel—Salt Lake City	**$305.0**	$308.0	$261.0	Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp. Multi-Family Healthcare	35% 29% 27% 5%
14.	**Hughes General Contractors** 900 N Redwood Rd North Salt Lake, UT 84054 801-898-4513 hughesgc.com	1958 385/385	Todd Hughes President 42	Deseret Peak High School—Tooele West High School Replacement—Salt Lake City	**$269.1**	$269.1	$283.2	K-12 Comm/Retail Sports/Rec Industrial	76% 10% 6% 3%
15.	**Bonneville Builders** 8610 S Sandy Parkway, Ste 210 Sandy, UT 84070 801-263-1406 bonnevillebuilders.com	1998 70/70	John Tebbs President & CEO 28	Ridgeview Townhomes—Highland The Hive on 11th—Salt Lake City	**$223.6**	$200.8	$106.2	Multi-Family Industrial Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp.	40% 25% 15% 10%
16.	**Zwick Construction** 434 W Ascension Way, Ste 150 Salt Lake City, UT 84123 801-484-1746 zwickconstruction.com	2007 61/71	Darin C. Zwick President & CEO 19	Lindon Utah Temple—Lindon The Mont SLC—Salt Lake City	$159.0 **$159.0**	$148.0 $178.0	$205.0 $230.0	Religious Multi-Family Industrial Comm/Retail	28% 15% 15% 14%
17.	**KIER Construction** 3710 Quincy Avenue Ogden, UT 84403 801-627-1414 kier.org	1986 80/18	Clint Costley President 22	The Residences at Sugar Alley—Salt Lake City Silos 3—Salt Lake City	**$154.6**	$192.7	$170.4	Multi-Family Civic/Inst. Comm/Retail Higher Ed	85% 8% 4% 2%
18.	**United Contractors** 1414 S Main Street Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-485-5533 buildwithunited.com	2004 29/51	Matthew Menlove President/Owner 22	Cedarwood Cottages—Sandy	$94.0 **$144.0**	$51.0 $98.0	$29.0 $90.0	Comm/Retail Multi-Family Sports/Rec Religious	60% 30% 5% 5%

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19.	**Pentalon Construction** 4376 S 700 E Salt Lake City, UT 84107 180-187-1034 pentalonconstruction.com	1993 65/66	Carl Tippets CEO 34	4800 Lofts—Murray City Lotus Alchemy—Salt Lake City	**$125.0**	$120.0	$121.0	Multi-Family Comm/Retail	92% 8%
20.	**Ivory Commercial** 3401 N Center St Ste 300 Lehi, UT 84043 801-407-6850 icocompanies.com	2009 145/145	Jim Seaberg President 17	Devon II Apartments—Orem Holbrook Apartments—Lehi	**$100.0**	$131.0	$187.0	Multi-Family Comm/Retail	90% 10%
21.	**Mint Construction** 7585 S Union Park Ave Ste 100 Sandy, UT 84047 801-996-3646 buildwithmint.com	2016 40/40	Morgan Sharp & Nick Hankes Co-Founders 10	Wheeler Townhomes — Murray Velvaere Wellness & Adventure Centers—Park City	**$89.0**	$66.0	$118.0	Comm/Retail Healthcare Multi-Family Industrial	35% 30% 15% 10%
22.	**Engage Contracting** 295 Jimmy Doolittle Rd Salt Lake City, UT 84116 801-395-4500 engagecontracting.com	2001 44/44	Donavon Minnis CEO & Founder 25	DND DND	**$57.7**	$50.9	$51.0	Civic/Inst. Industrial Healthcare Higher Ed	39% 26% 12% 8%
23.	**Cameron Construction** 573 W Billinis Road, Suite 1 Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-268-3584 cameronconstruction.com	1973 28/28	Kevin Cameron President 41	DND DND	**$51.0**	$56.9	$70.6	Comm/Retail	100%
24.	**Paulsen Construction** 3075 S Specialty Circle South Salt Lake, UT 84115 801-870-5411 paulsenconstruction.com	1925 32/32	John Paulsen President 30	Salt Lake City Library—Salt Lake City SLC Airport QTA—Salt Lake City	**$48.4**	$47.4	$21.4	Civic/Inst. Comm/Retail Multi-Family	60% 30% 10%
25.	**Eckman Construction** 3032 S 1030 W Salt Lake City, UT 84119 801-574-9793 eckmanconst.com	1918 32/32	Cooper Eckman President/Owner 13	General RV Center—South Weber UDOT Region 1 Headquarters—Ogden	**$36.0**	$27.0	$16.0	K-12 Comm/Retail Industrial	60% 30% 10%

FIRMS THAT DID NOT DISCLOSE REVENUES (LISTED BY # OF EMPLOYEES)

	Hadco Construction 1450 W 1850 N Lehi, UT 84043 801-766-7611 hadcoconstruction.com	1989 780/780	John Hadfield President 37	Terraine—West Jordan Deseret West Bank Interceptor Sewer—Grantsville	DND DND	DND DND	DND	Comm/Retail Residential	60% 40%
	Wasatch Comm Builders 1820 W Printers Row, Ste 100 West Valley City, UT 84119 801-961-1002 wasatchcb.com	2007 10/41	Scott Overman President & CEO 10	The ASH—St. George Market Center Phase 1—Salt Lake City	DND DND	DND DND	DND DND	Multi-Family	100%

2026 Top Utah General Contractor Rankings

Firm Name Address (HQ) Phone / Website	Year Est. # of Employees (UT/ALL)	Top Executive Title Years at Firm	Largest Utah Project Completed in 2025 Largest Utah Project started in 2026	Annual Revenues (millions) 2025 (Utah offices) (All U.S. offices)	2024	2023	Top Markets	%
2026 PARTICIPATING FIRMS WITH HEADQUARTERS OUTSIDE UTAH								
Mortensen 324 S State Street, Ste 100 Salt Lake City, UT 84111 801-386-5879 mortenson.com/locations/salt-lake-city	1954 167/10,000	Sarah Narjes General Manager 19	Confidential Data Center—Eagle Mountain Confidential Data Center—Eagle Mountain	$451.3 **$10,900.0**	$615.3 $6,700.0	$252.8 $5,500.0	Data Center Higher Ed Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp.	84% 8% 6% 1%
Sundt Construction 1970 N Redwood Rd Salt Lake City, UT 84116 480-293-3000 sundt.com	1890 82/5,372	Jasen Bennie VP & Intermtn. Reg. Mgr. 7	rPlus Energies Green River Energy Center — Emery County	$618.6 **$3,842.7**	$516.5 $3,090.6	$168.8 $2,254.0	Power Highway Wastewater Water	67% 15% 12% 6%
Fortis Construction, Inc. 38 E Scenic Pointe Dr Ste 160 Draper, UT 84020 801-459-8129 fortisconstruction.com	2003 26/540	Rob Fallow CEO 23	Huntsman Cancer Institute Level 3 Tissues Lab — Salt Lake City U of U Rice-Eccles Stadium West Tower Renovation — Salt Lake City	$8.6 **$3,583.2**	$2,243.4	$1,715.5	Healthcare Higher Ed Comm/Retail K-12	70% 24% 3% 2%
ARCO Design/Build 155 N 400 W Suite 310 Salt Lake City, UT 84103 385-479-9753 arcodb.com	1995 12/2,290	Nick Hasapes CEO & President 20	Wasatch Electric—West Jordan Titan Copper Ridge—West Jordan	$111.8 **$1,820.0**	$111.7 $1,660.0	$49.4 $2,200.0	Industrial Comm/Retail	62% 38%
COP Construction 555 W 1100 N North Salt Lake, UT 84054 801-298-9556 copconstruction.com	1947 75/250	Glen Perry President & CEO 9	Mountain Green Sewer Improvement District BNR Wastewater Treatment Plant—Morgan Nordic Valley Improvement District Wastewater Treatment Plant—Eden	DND DND	DND DND	DND DND	Underground Wastewater Water	40% 35% 25%

(photo by Dana Sohm, Sohm Photografx)

2026 Top Utah General Builders (Ranked by Utah Office Revenues)

	Firm Name Address (HQ) Phone / Website	Year Est. # of Employees (UT/ALL)	Top Executive Title Years at Firm	Largest Utah Project Completed in 2025 Largest Utah Project started in 2026	Annual Revenues (millions) 2025 (Utah offices) (All U.S. offices)	2024	2023	Top Markets	%
1.	**Big-D Construction** 404 W 400 S Salt Lake City, UT 84101 801-415-6000 bigdconstruction.com	1967 900/1,800	Cory Moore CEO 31	Seraph Apartments—Salt Lake City Cal 44 West Industrial—Salt Lake City	**$1,606.0** $3,618.7	$1,467.9 $2,922.7	$1,206.0 $2,619.6	Data Center Multi-Family Comm/Retail Higher Ed	30% 18% 18% 8%
2.	**Okland Construction** 1978 S W Temple Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-486-0144 okland.com	1918 717/1,263	Brett Okland President 32	North Capital Building—Salt Lake City West Valley Hospital—West Valley City	**$1,125.3** $2,294.0	$896.4 $1,814.7	$776.7 $1,554.6	Industrial Healthcare Comm/Retail Higher Ed	37% 15% 15% 13%
3.	**Layton Construction** 9090 Sandy Pkwy Sandy, UT 84070 801-568-9090 laytonconstruction.com	1953 714/2,231	Dave Layton President & CEO 40	Common Spirit Center at Western Sports Park—Farmington Huntsman Cancer Institute - Vineyard Campus — Vineyard	**$927.0** $7,800.0	$746.0 $4,871.0	$721.0 $3,871.0	Other Healthcare Industrial Higher Ed	32% 13% 11% 9%
4.	**Jacobsen Construction** 5181 W Amelia Earhart Drive Salt Lake City, UT 84116 801-973-0500 jacobsenconstruction.com	1922 853/906	Gary Ellis President and CEO 26	Wavetronix Springs—Springville Salt Palace Convention Ctr. Renovation & Expansion (*JV with AECOM Hunt)—Salt Lake City	**$855.0** $1,020.0	$990.0 $1,070.0	$935.0 $1,006.0	Religious Higher Ed Multi-Family Healthcare	40% 18% 17% 8%
5.	**Westland Construction** 1411 W 1250 S Orem, UT 84058-2222 801-808-7877 westlandconstruction.com	1992 235/235	Chris Houghton CEO 34	Cyprus High School—Magna West Jordan High School—West Jordan	**$727.4**	$648.9	$577.6	K-12 Religious Healthcare Civic/Inst.	40% 20% 13% 8%
6.	**Mortensen** 324 S State Street, Ste 100 Salt Lake City, UT 84111 801-386-5879 mortenson.com/locations/salt-lake-city	1954 167/10,000	Sarah Narjes General Manager 19	Confidential Data Center—Eagle Mountain Confidential Data Center—Eagle Mountain	**$451.3** $10,900.0	$615.3 $6,700.0	$252.8 $5,500.0	Data Center Higher Ed Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp.	84% 8% 6% 1%
7.	**Hogan & Associates Const.** 940 N 1250 W Centerville, UT 84014 801-951-7000 www.hoganconstruction.com	1945 252/252	Cristopher S. Hogan President/CEO 36	West Field High School—Taylor Springville High School Rebuild—Springville	**$435.5**	$504.2	$338.6	K-12 Civic/Inst. Resort/Hosp. Healthcare	80% 8% 3% 2%
8.	**BHI** 1175 E 2000 S Vernal, UT 84078 435-789-5252 bhico.com	1998 955/1,450	Erik Haslem CEO 18	Green River Solar—Emery Zions Canyon Fiber Optics—Washington & Kane County	**$349.1** $519.7	$260.6 $606.4	$149.1 $372.8	Industrial Oil & Gas Comm/Retail Higher Ed	40% 30% 10% 5%
9.	**Wadman Corporation** 2920 S 925 W Ogden, UT 84401 801-621-4185 wadman.com	1951 152/152	David Hogan President 29	Spark! Apartments—Salt Lake City South West Temple Hotel—Salt Lake City	**$305.0**	$308.0	$261.0	Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp. Multi-Family Healthcare	35% 29% 27% 5%
10.	**R&O Construction** 933 Wall Ave Ogden, UT 84404 801-414-5155 randoco.com	1980 137/175	Slade Opheikens President/CEO 36	Weber Blackstone Headquarters—Providence Wye Hotel—Park City	**$283.5** $473.0	$236.5 $463.0	$308.5 $434.0	Comm/Retail Multi-Family Industrial Resort/Hosp.	32% 20% 18% 12%

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11.	**Hughes General Contractors** 900 N Redwood Rd North Salt Lake, UT 84054 801-898-4513 hughesgc.com	1958 385/385	Todd Hughes President 42	Deseret Peak High School—Tooele West High School Replacement—Salt Lake City	**$269.1**	$269.1	$283.2	K-12 Comm/Retail Sports/Rec Industrial	76% 10% 6% 3%
12.	**Bonneville Builders** 8610 S Sandy Parkway, Ste 210 Sandy, UT 84070 801-263-1406 bonnevillebuilders.com	1998 70/70	John Tebbs President & CEO 28	Ridgeview Townhomes—Highland The Hive on 11th—Salt Lake City	**$223.6**	$200.8	$106.2	Multi-Family Industrial Comm/Retail Resort/Hosp.	40% 25% 15% 10%
13.	**Zwick Construction** 434 W Ascension Way, Ste 150 Salt Lake City, UT 84123 801-484-1746 zwickconstruction.com	2007 61/71	Darin C. Zwick President & CEO 19	Lindon Utah Temple—Lindon The Mont SLC—Salt Lake City	**$159.0** $159.0	$148.0 $178.0	$205.0 $230.0	Religious Multi-Family Industrial Comm/Retail	28% 15% 15% 14%
14.	**KIER Construction** 3710 Quincy Avenue Ogden, UT 84403 801-627-1414 kier.org	1986 80/18	Clint Costley President 22	The Residences at Sugar Alley—Salt Lake City Silos 3—Salt Lake City	**$154.6**	$192.7	$170.4	Multi-Family Civic/Inst. Comm/Retail Higher Ed	85% 8% 4% 2%
15.	**Pentalon Construction** 4376 S 700 E Salt Lake City, UT 84107 801-187-1034 pentalonconstruction.com	1993 65/66	Carl Tippets CEO 34	4800 Loft —Murray City Lotus Alchemy—Salt Lake City	**$125.0**	$120.0	$121.0	Multi-Family Comm/Retail	92% 8%
16.	**Ivory Commercial** 3401 N Center St Ste 300 Lehi, UT 84043 801-407-6850 icocompanies.com	2009 145/145	Jim Seaberg President 17	Devon II Apartments—Orem Holbrook Apartments—Lehi	**$100.0**	$131.0	$187.0	Multi-Family Comm/Retail	90% 10%
17.	**United Contractors** 1414 S Main Street Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-485-5533 buildwithunited.com	2004 29/51	Matthew Menlove Owner/President 22	Cedarwood Cottages—Sandy	**$94.0** $144.0	$51.0 $98.0	$29.0 $90.0	Comm/Retail Multi-Family Sports/Rec Religious	60% 30% 5% 5%
18.	**Mint Construction** 7585 S Union Park Ave. Ste 100 Sandy, UT 84047 801-996-3646 buildwithmint.com	2016 40/40	Morgan Sharp & Nick Hankes Co-Founders 10	Wheeler Townhomes—Murray Velvaere Wellness & Adventure Centers—Park City	**$89.0**	$66.0	$118.0	Comm/Retail Healthcare Multi-Family Industrial	35% 30% 15% 10%
19.	**Engage Contracting** 295 Jimmy Doolittle Rd Salt Lake City, UT 84116 801-395-4500 engagecontracting.com	2001 44/44	Donavon Minnis CEO & Founder 25	DND DND	**$57.7**	$50.9	$51.0	Civic/Inst. Industrial Healthcare Higher Ed	39% 26% 12% 8%
20.	**Cameron Construction** 573 W Billinis Road, Suite 1 Salt Lake City, UT 84115 801-268-3584 cameronconstruction.com	1973 28/28	Kevin Cameron President 41	DND DND	**$51.0**	$56.9	$70.6	Comm/Retail	100%

Utah State University Gardner Learning & Leadership Building

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21.	**Paulsen Construction** 3075 S Specialty Circle South Salt Lake, UT 84115 801-870-5411 paulsenconstruction.com	1925 32/32	John Paulsen President 30	Salt Lake City Library—Salt Lake City SLC Airport QTA—Salt Lake City	**$48.4**	$47.4	$21.4	Civic/Inst. Comm/Retail Multi-Family	60% 30% 10%
22.	**Eckman Construction** 3032 S 1030 W Salt Lake City, UT 84119 801-574-9793 eckmanconst.com	1918 32/32	Cooper Eckman President/Owner 13	General RV Center—South Weber UDOT Region 1 Headquarters — Ogden	**$36.0**	$27.0	$16.0	K-12 Comm/Retail Industrial	60% 30% 10%
23.	**Fortis Construction, Inc.** 38 E Scenic Pointe Dr., Ste 160 Draper, UT 84020 801-459-8129 fortisconstruction.com	2003 26/540	Rob Fallow CEO 23	Huntsman Cancer Institute Level 3 Tissues Lab — Salt Lake City U of U Rice-Eccles Stadium West Tower Renovation — Salt Lake City	**$8.6** $3,583.2	$2,243.4	$1,715.5	Healthcare Higher Ed Comm/Retail K-12	70% 24% 3% 2%
	FIRMS THAT DID NOT DISCLOSE REVENUES (LISTED BY # OF EMPLOYEES)								
	Wasatch Commercial Builders 1820 W Printers Row, Ste 100 West Valley City, UT 84119	2007 10/41	Scott Overman Executive Assistant 10	The ASH — St. George Market Center Phase 1 — Salt Lake City	DND DND	DND DND	 DND	Multi-Family	100%

2026 Top Heavy/Highway & Municipal/Utility (Ranked by Utah Office Revenues)

1.	**Clyde Companies, Inc.** 730 N 1500 W Orem, UT 84057 801-802-6900 clydeinc.com	1926 3,943/6,428	Jeremy Hafen CEO 21	Bangerter Highway South Interchanges — S. Jordan, Riverton, Bluffdale 2100 N — Lehi	**$747.0** $542.7 $1,390.0	$560.3 $1,066.3	DND $1,036.7		
2.	**Ralph L. Wadsworth Const Co.** 166 E 14000 S Suite 200 Draper, UT 84020 801-680-5369 wadsco.com	1975 700/1,100	Brandon Squire President 19	Bangerter Highway Design Build—Riverton 2100 North Design Build—Lehi	**$633.0** $693.0	$480.0 $568.0	$410.0 $453.0	Highway Heavy Civil Wastewater Water	40% 30% 10% 10%
3.	**Staker Parson Mat. & Const.** 2350 S 1900 W Ogden, UT 84401 801-731-1111 stakerparson.com	1952 2,268/3,067	Scott Parson CEO 42	SR-276;SR-95 N Wash To Park & SR-95 MP 34-41 — Hanksville US-191; South Summit—Carbon/Duchesne	**$544.7** $705.0	$436.6 $589.3	$438.2 $597.9	Highway Other Comm/Retail Civic/Inst.	64% 19% 11% 2%
4.	**Whitaker Construction Co.** 44 S 1050 W Brigham City, UT 84302 435-723-2921 whitcon.com	1953 668/964	Brett Nielsen President 31	Davis Aqueduct Reach 1 Parallel Pipeline Project—Layton UDOT - Colorado River Trail Gap—Moab	**$300.5** $387.2	$287.9 $351.7	$272.4 $322.8	Water Highway Wastewater Oil & Gas	40% 24% 22% 14%
	FIRMS THAT DID NOT DISCLOSE REVENUES (LISTED BY # OF EMPLOYEES)								
	Hadco Construction 1450 W 1850 N Lehi, UT 84043 801-766-7611 hadcoconstruction.com	1989 780/780	John Hadfield President 37	Terraine—West Jordan Deseret West Bank Interceptor Sewer—Grantsville	DND DND	DND DND	DND DND	Comm/Retail Residential	60% 40%
	COP Construction 555 W 1100 N North Salt Lake, UT 84054 801-298-9556 copconstruction.com	1947 75/250	Glen Perry President & CEO 9	Mountain Green Sewer Improvement District BNR Wastewater Treatment Plant—Morgan Nordic Valley Improvement District Wastewater Treatment Plant—Eden	DND DND	DND DND	DND DND	Underground Wastewater Water	40% 35% 25%

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