

STEPHENSON GENERAL CONTRACTORS

**Design-build general
contracting in Johnston
County**



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MARCH 2015 MARKS 42 years in business for Stephenson General Contractors (SGC), based in Smithfield, North Carolina. The family-owned company has been serving clients throughout Johnston County and beyond since 1973, building many first-of-a-kind design-build projects, including townhomes, a signature charter school and several cutting edge medical facilities.

“We are a commercial, industrial and office general contractor, but over the last decade about 80 percent of our business has been medical related,” says Durwood Stephenson, founder and president of SGC. “We’ve become a go-to contractor in the area medical market.”

SGC’s current position is far from where the company started in 1973. “We started out building homes and apartments, eventually graduating to office spaces, some of which we own and others that we manage for owners,” notes Stephenson.



LEAVING THE CORPORATE WORLD

Stephenson brought real estate and property management know-how to the table when he established SGC. "I was working for Progress Energy, which is now Duke Energy," he recalls. "I had my real estate license and helped acquire land for the company. But after some time, I realized the corporate world wasn't the right fit for me."

At just 25 years old, Stephenson made a bold decision, trading in the security of his corporate role to start his own company. "I just really wanted to go off and do my own thing," he says. Along with the help of his wife, Vickie Stephenson as CEO of SGC, the firm began to take off.

Since inception, SGC has been making a name in real estate development and general contracting across the commercial, industrial and medical markets in greater Johnston County. "We tend to stick to a 100-mile radius of Smithfield," says Stephenson. "We were licensed in South Carolina and Virginia, but there has been more than enough work to keep us moving locally."




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**Congratulations to
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on your recognition in
US Builders Review.**

We appreciate the confidence you have placed in us, and your loyalty over the past 20 years. Best wishes for the future, and we look forward to continuing that valuable relationship.

We would like to applaud **Stephenson General Contractors** for their continued excellence within the design-build industry. Their quality showmanship and knowledge of products and services continue to raise the industry standard. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to this locally owned and operated firm for serving the construction needs of the Triangle for over 40 years.

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With a small team of 10 employees, SGC is like family. "We just had two of our guys retire after being here for 29 years," says Stephenson. "Most of our people have been with us for a long time."

SGC's team included licensed general contractors, real estate brokers, home inspectors and support staff. "We also offer design capabilities through a registered architect with approximately 40 years' experience, along with site planning through a professional engineer and registered land surveyor," adds Stephenson.

DESIGN-BUILD DELIVERY

Today, the construction market is not the same as when SGC entered the business. Over the last 20 years, design-build has become a preferred project delivery method. "Over the last few decades we have seen a market transition and now we're doing a lot of design-build projects," says Stephenson.

SGC was one of the first area contractors to develop the townhome concept. "This type of housing is a connected single-family home," says Stephenson. "Our team was the first to write the zoning, design and develop this type of property in Johnston County."

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The firm's design-build work shines in the medical market. "In the last 15 to 20 years we have completed a range of medical facilities – vascular centers, dialysis clinics, surgery centers, pharmacies – you name it," says Stephenson. "We just wrapped up the Tomar Medical Building in Clayton, North Carolina. This was an interesting project because it was for a husband-wife doctor team, combining two practices into one offering very different medical treatments."

"Another unique medical project is our work at a UNC fertility clinic," adds Stephenson. "This was one of the most complex medical jobs we have completed. It included 16 different kinds of medical gas and highly controlled environments with no temperature variations."

A source of great pride for SGC is the state-of-the-art Women's Center at the local hospital. "Our only granddaughter, Ava, was actually born in this facility," notes Stephenson. "With careful oversight by David Price, project superintendent, we completed the facility amidst the unpredictable activities of a hospital environment. At times we had to halt work to accommodate the birth of a new baby in an adjoining room."

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After the onset of the recession, Stephenson says SGC did see a significant slowdown in the once-steady sector. "This new lending environment had a pretty large impact on our business," he details.

Fortunately, Stephenson says as the economy bounces back, banks have relaxed considerably. "Now banks are calling, looking for customers to lend to," he says.

LEANING ON TRUSTED SUBCONTRACTOR PARTNERS

Outside of the recovering medical market, SGC has completed Johnston County's first charter school – the \$5 million K-12 Neuse Charter School. In aligning with the school's vision to create a positive, safe and creative learning environment for students to emerge as respectful, responsible citizens of a global community, SGC led the construction of the anything-but-ordinary facility.

"Aesthetically speaking, this is the most upscale building in the town in 30 years," says Stephenson. "The facility includes a lot of glass throughout and small study pods for group sessions, as well as all of the latest technology that's becoming standard in schools across the country."

Weather was the biggest issue in the Neuse School construction. "Everyone knows how brutal this winter was and our schedule was way behind due to the weather," says Stephenson. "Fortunately, SGC has a trusted team of subcontractors we've been working with since the beginning. This team came together, working seven days a week through ice and everything else. We had students set to move into the building by August 2014 and we had the project completed ahead of schedule."

Stephenson points to one subcontractor in particular, Baker Roofing Company. "Our hats are off to Baker; they put the roof of the three-story building on in an ice storm," he says. "Without that we never would have made the schedule. They really got things going on the right foot. Great subcontractors and the diligence and persistence of Jimmy Boykin, vice-president of construction at SGC aided by Glenn Loo, project superintendent, battled the worst winter in years to complete the project on time and under budget."

BUILDING COMMUNITY

For Stephenson, this job was fairly personal. "My son-in-law teaches at the school and my granddaughter will be going to school at Neuse in the fall," he says. "We're actually preparing

We extend our congratulations to Stephenson General Contractors, our partners of more than 40 years, for being selected as the spotlight contractor for this edition of US Builders Review. A successful partnership from the early days in the 1970s, together our firms developed single-family subdivisions and homes, transitioning to multifamily housing and later to commercial and industrial with a focus on medical facilities.

Our firm provided the site work and Stephenson General Contractors constructed the buildings. Working as a team, we built successful firms, earning a reputation for quality and efficiency.

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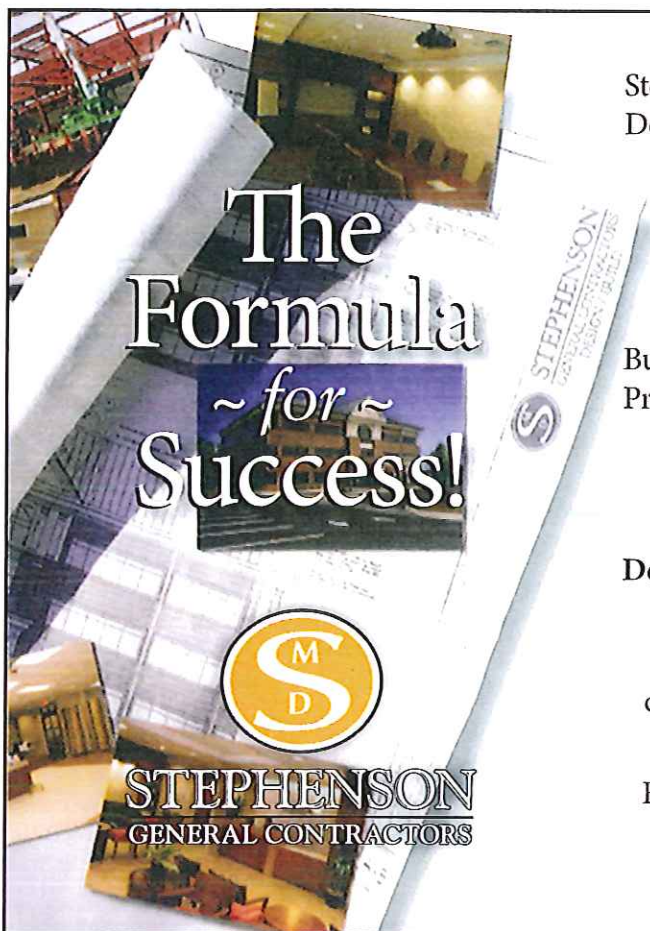
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to start the second phase of construction; an addition that's in design now and will be completed over the next few months."

Schools, office buildings, medical clinics, police departments, town halls – no matter the facility, Stephenson says at the end of the day, he goes home feeling good because he knows SGC is building facilities that make vibrant communities possible. "Like any business, there are good and bad days," he says. "But most days, I love taking a concept and bringing it to fruition. Over the years we have built many landmark buildings throughout this area and they are lasting parts of the community that will live on long after I'm gone."

SGC regularly donates time and financial backing to good causes throughout Johnston County. "I was the chairman on the Capital Campaign for Johnston

Health," says Stephenson. "We raised more than \$5 million to provide a hospice facility for the citizens of Johnston County."

SGC is also working with Harbor shelter to build a larger group home for victims of domestic violence. "We've helped raise funding and made a significant donation ourselves," says Stephenson. "This is something we're really excited about because everyone at our company has been involved in some way. Even when some people told us it wouldn't happen, we have all been determined to see it through."

After 42 years and counting, Stephenson General Contractors continues to build better communities in Johnston County and surrounding areas, putting up landmark facilities where people grow, heal, learn, work and live. •