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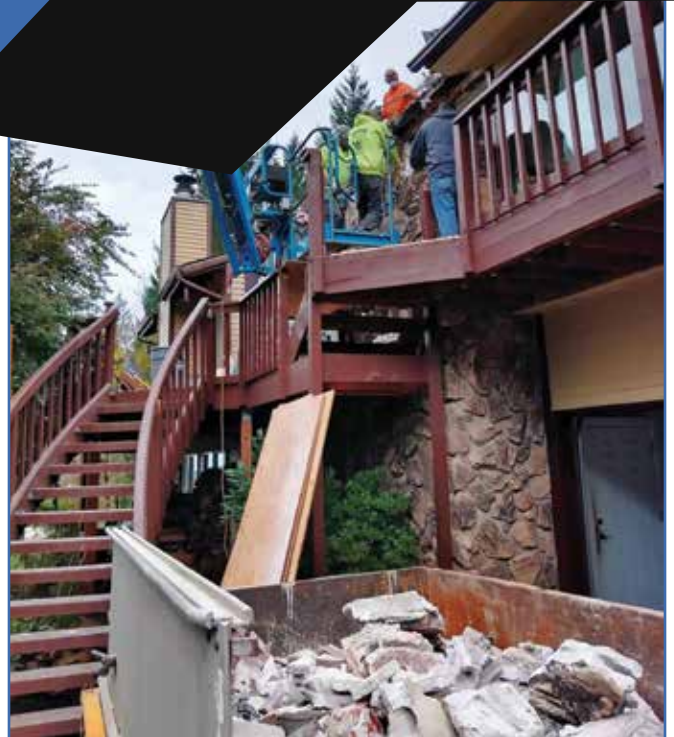
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# *In this issue*

- 6** A message from the president of the Salem Contractors Exchange, Travis Squires
- 7** A message from the executive director of the Salem Contractors Exchange, Kay Evans
- 8** About Salem Contractors Exchange
- 9** Salem Contractors Exchange benefits
- 10** Charter members 1985 - 2024
- 11** Membership prices
- 12** History of the Salem Contractors Exchange - 75th anniversary
- 16** Salem Contractors Exchange 2025 Awards Banquet: A night of celebration and recognition
- 18** Past presidents
- 19** A new chapter for Salem - The Canary redevelopment project
- 22** I-Build: Building futures and strengthening the trades pipeline in Salem
- 24** The SEDCOR Construction Alliance: Building talent, communities, and a stronger region
- 26** A new blueprint for collaboration

## *Index to advertisers*

Anderson Roofing Company, Incorporated.....	11
Barker Surveying.....	9
Bear Electric, Inc. ....	7
Emery & Sons Construction Group, LLC.....	23
Gerding Builders, LLC.....	25
Mustang Truss, Inc.....	OBC
Owen Construction, Inc.....	11
Power Concrete Cutting & Demolition, Inc. ....	IFC
Premier Propane, Inc.....	15
R&S Industrial Supplies/Evergreen Machine & Mfg., Inc.....	5
Safety Electric, Incorporated .....	3
Thomas Kay Flooring & Interiors.....	8

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## A message from the president of the Salem Contractors Exchange

# Travis Squires

Penetrations Inc., Concrete Sawing and Drilling

## My chance to give back to the Salem Contractors Exchange

In 1991, my father, Russ Squires, left a solid career at one of the nation's largest concrete cutting companies to start a business of his own. With the support of my mother, Darla Squires, he moved our family from our childhood home in Idaho to Oregon. Once we arrived in Oregon, they quickly set out to build our family business: Penetrations Inc. Concrete Sawing and Drilling.

The early days of establishing our business name in a new market wasn't easy. I remember hearing my parents discuss the setback of missing the Yellow Pages advertisement deadline that year – back when people relied on physical directories to find services, not the Internet. Missing that deadline created a significant challenge in getting the business off the ground.

Then came a turning point. My dad walked into the Salem Contractors Exchange (SCE) and was warmly greeted by Bev Jones, the SCE director. She had heard about his story and immediately began explaining how joining the SCE would benefit our business. Once he signed up for membership, she gave him printouts of upcoming projects, access to plans, and a directory of SCE members. More than that, joining the SCE introduced us to a community where business relationships were built face-to-face. My dad shook hands, handed out business

cards, and forged connections that helped propel our business forward.

Fast forward 34 years and Penetrations Inc. is still going strong. My father has since retired, entrusting me with running the family business that he and my mother started. Like all businesses, the SCE has evolved with the times, embracing new technologies. But the heart of this community remains unchanged. One thing I've come to appreciate even more as the years go by is the personal touch the SCE continues to offer.

Like the current SCE director, Kay Evans, and all the staff at the Exchange, they welcome every new member and create a sense of belonging that is rare in today's digital world, where connections can often feel impersonal.

Looking back, as I serve this association today, I feel both proud and humbled to be elected president of the board of directors for the SCE – an association that played such a crucial role in the success of our business. It reminds me of the incredible impact the Exchange has had not only on our family business, but on the community in general. Now, this is my chance to give back and pay forward the opportunity that was extended to us when we needed it most.

**Travis Squires**



## A message from the executive director of the Salem Contractors Exchange **Kay Evans**

### Dear esteemed members,

This year is bittersweet for me as it will be my last year at the Salem Contractors Exchange. I will be retiring in December 2025. As I look around at the members I have come to know and love, I have seen companies start and grow, as well as large companies disintegrate. I have also seen friends come and go. I watched the economy wreak havoc on the construction industry and I watched as COVID impacted how we do business.

I am so grateful for this opportunity to bring the Exchange into a more technological world. When I started, we received mountains of packages every day that would need to be scanned and put on the website. Then, when the bidding was done, they would have to be shipped back to the architect, engineer, or owner. Now all you need to do is hit the download button (no wonder the postal service is hurting).

I was instrumental in bringing about the sponsoring of the Health Insurance Association, now known as CBX. So many of our members are using this service and the SCE benefits from our members' use.

The Exchange is a great way to get to know other contractors through our activities and events. At our Meet the Prime event, there were 17 general contractors in attendance. We also had over 100 attendees at our awards banquet and golf tournament. You never know when you will run across someone you could be doing business with.

The Salem Contractors Exchange has been my passion. I have watched it grow and adapt over the years, but the element that keeps it going is the members. From the members that sponsor, show up to events, and participate on the board to those that use the website for projects to bid or are part of the insurance association – every member is important and valued.

May you and your companies prosper in the years to come!

**Kay Evans**



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# About Salem Contractors Exchange




Salem Contractors Exchange is a member-owned full-service plan center. The projects we publish are from all over Oregon and southwest Washington. We get projects from federal, state, and local agencies as well as architects, engineers, and general contractors. As a plan center, we upload these projects to our website and keep track of addendum, plan holders' lists, and bid results.

The SCE prints large format prints and vinyl banners. Contractors can get waterproof and tear proof paper, as well as color copies. We can reproduce employee handbooks and job closeout manuals for your convenience.

Salem Contractors Exchange also sponsors a health insurance association, which is marketed as CBX. It helps our members get more affordable quotes for their health insurance needs.

Classes are held in the spring and fall and range from first aid and CPR to plan reading, investing, and marketing... there is something for everybody.

Each year we hold four events: our membership meeting in January, awards banquet in April, golf tournament in June, and a BBQ/cornhole tournament in September. These are great events to get to know other contractors and have a good time. 



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# BENEFITS

## What are the benefits to becoming a member of the Salem Contractors Exchange?

Discover the unparalleled advantages of joining the Salem Contractors Exchange (SCE), where we empower construction professionals with tools and opportunities to thrive.

From streamlining project access with our centralized database to offering exclusive health insurance plans, networking events, a comprehensive website, and top-tier printing services, SCE membership is designed to save you time and boost your business.

Dive into the benefits that make the Exchange an essential resource for contractors in Oregon and SW Washington!

## How much time do you take looking for and downloading projects?

The Exchange gathers projects to one central location. We download and keep track of projects in the Oregon and SW Washington area. We take care of addendum, plan holders lists, and get the bid results. Last year we had over 3,300 projects in the Exchange. For \$67 a month we bring this service to you!

## Health Insurance Association

We sponsor a Health Insurance Association with large group prices for small groups and a variety of health plans and providers.

## Events are held four times a year


We hold four events where you can meet other construction companies and educate them about your services or become acquainted with other subcontractors and general contractors. The events include an annual meeting, banquet, golf tournament, and barbecue.

## Full-service website

The website has all the information about the projects (including addendum, plan holders lists, bid results), events, continuing education classes, members, and the Exchange. It's an all-in-one easy to get to spot without leaving your office. There is a five-day free trial membership you can sign up for as well.

## Full-service printing

We print large-format copies in black and white and color. We do banners or after-construction manuals for the owners. Need plans for your jobsite? We have water-proof and tear-resistant paper.

For more information on the SCE, contact Kay Evans, director, at 503-362-7657, ext. 1, or [kay@sceonline.org](mailto:kay@sceonline.org). 





# Charter members 1985 - 2024

Alpha Steel	Home Insulation	Salem Electric
Barry Bray Construction	II-S Mechanical	Salem Fire Alarm
Caslin, Inc.	Thomas Kay	Salem Heating
Cherry City Electric	LP Company	Salem Road and Driveway
Code Electric	McGilchrist & Sons	Salem Wood Products
Dalke Construction	John Mills Concrete	Santiam Steel
Davidson's Masonry	Nugent Masonry	Sherwin Williams
Emery and Sons	North Santiam Paving	Southtown Glass
Gene McMurrin	Northside Electric	Stom Painters
Gormley Plumbing and Heating	Oregon Cascade Plumbing and Heating	TCB Construction
H&H Paving	Outdoor Fence Company	Triplett Wellman
C.J. Hansen	Paragon Construction	Withers Lumber
Haas and Hathaway (Haas Contracting)	R&G Excavating	Woodburn Construction
Hammerquist	Rodda Paint	Windsor Rock Products

## Services provided by SCE and the benefits of being a member include:

- Access to public and private commercial project plans in Oregon and SW Washington;
- Weekly newsletter, which includes plans in the Exchange, plans coming, plan holders lists, bid results, and building permits for City of Salem and Marion County;
- Specification and blueprint copies;
- Complimentary notary public services;
- Archiving services;
- Advertising in newsletters and on the website;
- After-hours access code;
- Continuing education and safety classes;
- Conference room available for member use; and
- Competitive fully insured group medical, dental, and vision.



# Membership prices



Unlock the value of the Salem Contractors Exchange (SCE) with membership options tailored to your business needs. Whether you're seeking basic project updates with an Associate Membership, limited online access to project details with Level 1, or full access to plans and specs with Level 2, the SCE offers flexible pricing to support contractors in Oregon and SW Washington.

Explore our membership tiers, starting at just \$300, and find the perfect fit to elevate your construction business!

## Associate Membership - \$300.00\* (\$50 initiation fee)

Associate membership is for informational purposes only. Associate members will receive a weekly newsletter and can advertise in the newsletter and on the web. Newsletters provide a list of projects in simplified form. Membership does not allow access to detailed projects online or at the Exchange. Associate members are NOT eligible to participate the SCE Employee Welfare Benefit Plan.

## Level 1 Limited Online Access - \$490\* (\$100 initiation fee)

Level 1 membership allows full access to the plan center plus web content, which includes descriptions of all projects in the plan center and the ability to view and download table of contents, plan holder lists, and addenda. Level 1 members will not be able to view and download plans and specs. Level 1 members are eligible to participate in the SCE Employee Welfare Benefit Plan provided the company meets the plan's definition of a Qualified Construction Industry Employer.

## Level 2 Full Online Access - \$800\* (\$100 initiation fee)

Level 2 members have all the privileges of Level 1 with the added ability to view and download plans and specs online at no additional cost. Level 2 members are eligible to participate the SCE Employee Welfare Benefit Plan provided the company meets the plan's definition of a Qualified Construction Industry Employer.

\* Initiation fee is a one-time fee as long as membership doesn't expire. 



# History of the Salem Contractors Exchange

## *75th Anniversary*



The first meeting of the Salem Contractors Exchange in Salem, Oregon was held on August 25, 1949. The purpose of the Exchange hasn't changed in 75 years; it still connects project owners, general contractors, and trade subcontractors. However, how it does this work has changed significantly.

When it started, dues at the Salem Exchange – which was modeled after the Builders Exchange Co-op in Portland, Oregon – were \$3 per month for out-of-town contractors and \$4 per month for local contractors. This appears to be an attempt to draw

out-of-town contractors to join, probably hoping they would provide more work.

The annual Exchange Banquet has been a staple since the first year. The first one was in 1950, and no women or liquor were allowed. The cost to attend was \$3.50. At this point, the banquet wasn't much more than a social event, as architects didn't give out awards until 1956. Photos of these early banquets show they were just as much fun as today's. Costumes and odd-shaped trophies were a staple. The event was held in local hotels until the year 2000, when

it moved to Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City, Oregon, where it has been held since.

### **"Get out of here before we change our minds"**

The first Exchange office was at 335 Bush St. SE, near Commercial Street. The first secretary, Aureta Smith, was hired. In 1954, the office moved to the Capital Press Building at the intersection of Broadway and Hood Street. Then, in the early 1960s, it moved again to 565 Hood St. SE, which is now owned by the Salem Alliance Church.

Finally, in 1975, after 10 years of planning and saving, a parcel of land at 2256 Judson St. SE was purchased to become the permanent home for the Exchange. When plans were submitted to build an office, the city council said, "No. We must have a warehouse." A couple of letters were written, and several members petitioned the city council before they finally said, "Yes, get out of here before we change our minds."

Most of the building materials, labor, and design services required to construct the current building were donated or provided at cost by local contractors. The list of donors reads like a who's who of Salem construction in the 1970s:



- John Riches of Riches Electric designed the electrical system
- Wes Gladow of Salem Heating and Sheet Metal designed the HVAC system
- Carl Williams of Payne, Settecase, Smith AIA drew the plans for the permit
- Marion Construction put in the footings
- Davidson's Masonry donated block and put in the masonry for the foundation
- Bowen Brothers, Valley Plumbing, and Oregon Cascade provided plumbing
- Brownell Electric provided electrical
- LP Company furnished and installed the ceiling grid
- Greer Brothers Landscaping coordinated the plantings

One of the most iconic components of the Exchange building is the stained glass reliquary with the building number that's installed over the entry door. It was provided by F & G Stained Glass Studio and has been lovingly preserved, even when the entry was remodeled a few years ago.

## **A history of women in construction**

The staff has always been almost exclusively women. Some started working part-time while raising children, although the records aren't complete. Aureta Smith was the first to have the title of secretary.



Phyllis Shaw was office manager from 1965 to 1982 and helped cut the ribbon on the new building in August 1975. Incidentally, the Salem chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) was chartered in 1972, and the "WICs" are credited with providing food for the open house.

Beverley Green worked at the Exchange from 1979 to 2008. She started out part-time as a secretary. Her duties included typing up the newsletter and sending plans back to the architects and contractors. The newsletter was typed on an electric typewriter each week, duplicated, folded, stamped, and mailed to all the members.

At that time, cards were used to track who had each set of plans (like a library system). The Exchange received plans and specifications from architects and hung them on plan racks waiting for the contractors to look at them. Contractors could check them out for two hours before they had to be returned. Estimators would sit in one of about 20 cubicles

and perform their takeoffs and calculations. Later, a remodel provided private offices where they could close the door and have some privacy.

When Phyllis Shaw retired in 1982, Green became the office manager. She remained in that position until 2008 when she retired. Green was part of the decision to purchase a large format copier, the first in Salem, and start providing printing services. It was so successful they had to hire someone to run the machine full-time. It turned into quite a profit center until everyone else started buying machines.

Kay Evans, the current executive director, started working part-time and posting jobs on the Internet in 2004. She became director in 2009. She's kept detailed records about the number of jobs the Exchange handles. In 2006, around 1,100 projects came through and, in 2024, the number was close to 3,500. Of course, most of those jobs now come in digitally, but it wasn't always that way.



When Evans started, plans still came through the mail or other delivery services. Her job was to go through the packages, find the invitation to bid, post the job on the Internet, and put the plans in a cubby hole or on a rack for contractors to check out.

In 2012, Evans was pivotal in adding health insurance as a benefit for Exchange members. Through the program, members actively involved

in construction can sign up and get group rates on medical, vision, and dental coverage. This program has been a resounding success, providing small contractors access to affordable coverage.

While women have made up almost all the Exchange staff over the years, the board of directors has been more diverse. The first woman to be elected president of the board was

Bonique Hollinrake, then of Green Acres Landscape, in 2019.

### **It's not all serious**

While the Exchange helps local contractors do some serious business, it isn't always so intense. In fact, almost from the beginning, it was about having fun as well. Photos from early events show doors being used as trophies and people wearing costumes, and today's banquets are always themed. Past themes include Mardi Gras, western, Hollywood, and the 1960s and 70s.

Scott Erickson, former owner of Viesko Quality Concrete, tells a funny story involving Tom Dalke of Dalke Construction:

"Our board used to meet at the Prime Rib, which was a really fancy restaurant down on the riverfront," Erickson said. "They had a little room where we met, which had big pictures of former governors like Straub and McCall. The year Tom Dalke was president, we came in for a board meeting, and he'd replaced the picture of one of the governors with one of his head, just like their portraits."

### **"Success on a stick"**

The Exchange has been responsible for the growth of several local contracting companies.

Scott Erickson of Viesko Quality Concrete credits his time at the Exchange for making his venture a success.

"In 1980, I had a concrete paving



**"Everything was expensive, so we couldn't make a bunch of copies of plans and distribute them. We didn't have email and file sharing like we have today."**

company, and to do takeoffs on the parking lot for a project, I needed to come down to look at the plans," he said. "I ended up selling that business to Brad Swinford, another member. We want people to be successful, and this place is success on a stick."

Rich Duncan, founder of Rich Duncan Construction, a Salem commercial general contractor, said he pretty much lived there in the early days of his company.

"I didn't have an office, so I would go there with my 10-key calculator and notepad and do take-offs," Duncan added. "Everything was expensive, so we couldn't make a bunch of copies of plans and distribute them. We didn't have email and file sharing like we have today. Putting jobs out to bid and communicating with the subcontractors about the opportunity to bid on them is a big deal. I even held meetings there because the office I had was too small. My company grew right along with the Exchange and its services."

### **Plans for the future**


The Exchange is poised for another transition, as executive director Evans is retiring at the end of 2025. Lori Cooley will take her place. Cooley has worked at the Exchange since 2008 when she started scanning plans to post them on the Internet and has since moved up to office manager.

When asked about her goals for the Exchange, she said she'd like to be more involved in the community so contractors can hear about them. Also, they recently purchased a banner machine she hopes will allow contractors to see the Exchange as a one-stop shop for all of their printing needs. Additional plans include expanding the recent Meet the Prime event to make it an annual chance for subcontractors and general contractors to meet face-to-face.

Cooley is excited to see what the future holds for the Exchange and herself.

"I feel like it's a big growth opportunity," she said.

The Salem Contractors Exchange currently has about 450 members and is looking to grow, Cooley added.

"We're here to be of service to contractors. We spend a lot of time getting jobs up on the website, so they don't have to do all that legwork," she said. "They can come to one place, and it's there for them. It's a huge cost-saving measure for them." 

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# Salem Contractors Exchange 2025 Awards Banquet: *A night of celebration and recognition*

The 2025 Salem Contractors Exchange Awards Banquet, held at Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City, was a memorable evening filled with celebration, recognition, and a nod to the organization's storied past.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the Salem Contractors Exchange (SCE), the event embraced a 1950s formal theme, transforming the venue into a vibrant scene adorned with balloons, lights, and an atmosphere of camaraderie. Attendees enjoyed delicious food, flowing drinks, and a spirited raffle that raised significant funds for the Scholarship Fund, though one lucky table seemed to claim most of the prizes – a classic raffle tale!

## Certificates of Recognition

*Certificates of Recognition were awarded to projects with sole nominations in their respective divisions, showcasing exceptional work across various sectors of construction. The recipients were:*

Division 1 (\$500,000-\$2,000,000):  
**Rich Duncan Construction**  
for Mill Creek Fuel Station

Division 3 Concrete:  
**Dalke Construction**  
for Rivenwood Apartments

Division 5 Metals:  
**Prime Contracting**  
for IEC Oregon Training Center

Division 7 Thermal and Moisture Protection:  
**Pfeifer Roofing**  
for Rivenwood Apartments

Division 8 Openings:  
**Blackline Glazing**  
for The Forge

Division 9 Drywall:  
**Mid-Valley Commercial**  
for Lane Community College ITEC

Division 9 Flooring:  
**Thomas Kay Flooring**  
for Rivenwood Apartments

Division 21 Fire Suppression:  
**Jet Industries**  
for Rivenwood Apartments

Division 32 Landscaping:  
**Green Acres Landscape**  
for Hope Plaza

Division 33 Utilities:  
**Dalke Construction**  
for Rivenwood Apartments

## Award winners

*The evening's highlight was the presentation of awards to outstanding projects and individuals across multiple divisions. The 2025 winners demonstrated excellence in craftsmanship, innovation, and leadership:*

Division 1 General (\$2-5 Million):  
**Defryn Dunkley**  
The Forge, Rich Duncan Construction

Division 1 General (\$5 Million Plus):  
**Corey Hancock**  
Rivenwood Apartments,  
Dalke Construction

Division 4 Masonry:  
**Nick Fredinberg**  
The Forge, Fredinberg Masonry

Division 7 Thermal Protection:  
**Dave Carr**  
IEC Oregon Training Center,  
Salem Heating and Sheet Metal

Division 22 Plumbing:  
**Dan Fowler**  
Rivenwood Apartments, Jet Industries

Division 23 HVAC:  
**Sean Edwards**  
Hope Plaza,  
Salem Heating and Sheet Metal

Division 26 Electrical:  
**Nathan Gehring**  
Hope Plaza, Northside Electric

Division 27 Communication:  
**LVNW Team**  
Ridgeview Samaritan Health,  
Low Voltage NW

Division 28 Security (2024):  
**LVNW Team**  
Rivenwood Apartments,  
Low Voltage NW

Division 31 Earthwork:  
**Mike Davis**  
Rivenwood Apartments,  
Dalke Construction

People's Choice:  
**Bill McCall and Cody Fox**  
Hope Plaza, Rich Duncan Construction





## Lifetime Achievement Award


A heartfelt moment came with the surprise presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Kay Evans. Her plaque, inscribed with "In recognition of a lifetime of outstanding and enduring contributions to the Salem Contractors Exchange," honored her decades of dedication and impact on the organization. The announcement was met with resounding applause, reflecting the deep appreciation for her legacy.

## A night to remember

Emcees Scott Erickson and Nate Cooke masterfully guided the evening, weaving in historical anecdotes about the SCE that added depth and nostalgia to the program.

Their engaging presence kept the energy high throughout the night.

The raffle, a cornerstone of the banquet, featured an array of prizes, including coveted vacation trips. The funds raised through these efforts will support the SCE Scholarship Fund, empowering the next generation of construction professionals. A heartfelt thank you goes to all who contributed to this worthy cause.

The 2025 Awards Banquet was not only a celebration of excellence in construction, but also a testament to the enduring spirit of the SCE. As the organization looks forward to its next chapter, events like these remind us of the strength, talent, and community that have defined it for 75 years. 



# Past presidents



1949 – Don Patton  
 1950 – Bill Lewis  
 1951 – Gordon Carl  
 1952 – Gordon Carl  
 1953 – Lee Andrews  
 1954 – Bob Nickens  
 1955 – Willis Hill  
 1956 – Clayton Gregg  
 1957 – Spot Simpson  
 1958 – Spot Simpson  
 1959 – Stan Hammer  
 1960 – Bob Arthur  
 1961 – Jim Armpriest  
 1962 – Hugh Lankins  
 1963 – Gene Fields  
 1964 – John Ritchie  
 1965 – Claris Poppert  
 1966 – Jerry Walling  
 1967 – Ed Cherry  
 1968 – David Lantz  
 1969 – Jerry Fishel  
 1970 – Gene Mildren  
 1971 – Preston Jones  
 1972 – Gene Scott  
 1973 – Wayne Warren  
 1974 – Dale Peterson  
 1975 – Al Jensen  
 1976 – Dick Rudie  
 1977 – Roger Cummings  
 1978 – Jim Davis  
 1979 – Ted Albrich  
 1980 – Craig Simmons  
 1981 – Brad Pence  
 1982 – Orville Parkin  
 1983 – Paul Hammer  
 1984 – Dave Loescher  
 1985 – Dave Loescher  
 1986 – Tom Dalke – Dalke Construction  
 1987 – Scott Erickson – Viesko

1988 – Barry Brown  
 1989 – Jeff Schroeder  
 1990 – Bill McMichael  
 1991 – Rich Evans – Salem Heating  
 1992 – Darrell Evenson – Davidsons Masonry  
 1993 – Darrell Evenson – Davidsons Masonry  
 1994 – Ray Peterson  
 1995 – Ray Peterson  
 1996 – Wally Lantz  
 1997 – Wally Lantz  
 1998 – Russ Akin  
 1999 – Jeff Schroeder  
 2000 – Darrell Evenson – Davidson's Masonry  
 2001 – Darrell Evenson – Davidson's Masonry  
 2002 – Steve Rux – LP Company  
 2003 – Wally Lantz – Landmark Pacific  
 2004 – Wally Lantz – Landmark Pacific  
 2005 – Davis Evenson – Davidson's Masonry  
 2006 – Davis Evenson – Davidson's Masonry  
 2007 – Cliff Kinnaman – Sunbelt Rentals  
 2008 – Cliff Kinnaman – Sunbelt Rentals  
 2009 – Darand Davies – Dallas Glass  
 2010 – Russ Squires – Penetrations  
 2011 – Jed Kercher – K & E Excavating  
 2012 – Michael Fulgaro – Fulgaro Interiors  
 2013 – Nate Cooke – Rich Duncan Construction  
 2014 – Dan Wellert – White Oak Construction  
 2015 – Rick Day – Advantage Precast  
 2016 – Scott Zollinger – K & E Excavating  
 2017 – Peter Shanks – White Oak Construction  
 2018 – Chad Elliott – Rich Duncan Construction  
 2019 – Bonique Hollinrake – Green Acres Landscape  
 2020 – Araceli Carlos – Dalke Construction  
 2021 – Jason Schaap – Safety Electric  
 2022 – Joe Davis – White Oak Construction  
 2023 – Julie Davis – White Oak Construction  
 2024 – Adam Jenkins – Low Voltage NW  
 2025 – Travis Squires – Penetrations 





*The Cannery redevelopment project, a \$160 million endeavor led by Future Neighborhood Development (FuND), is taking shape on a 13-acre site in Salem on the bank of the Willamette River.*

# *A new chapter for Salem*

RENDERINGS COURTESY OF  
HELD ARCHITECTURE.

## The Cannery redevelopment project will take shape on a 13-acre site in Salem along the banks of the Willamette River

By Shayna Wiwierski

On the banks of the Willamette River, where the hum of industrial machinery once filled the air, a transformative vision is taking shape.

The Cannery redevelopment project, a \$160 million endeavor led by Future Neighborhood Development (FuND), promises to reimagine a historic 13-acre site in Salem, Oregon. This vibrant, sustainable community hub is a bold redefinition of urban living in the Willamette Valley.

At the heart of this initiative is Trent Michels, FuND's principal and a Salem native whose journey from United

States Military Academy West Point graduate to real estate visionary fuels the project's ambition.

"I'm an Oregon boy through and through," Michels said, reflecting on his return home after years working with prolific developers in the Southeast. There, he honed his skills on large-scale, market-rate multi-family projects and master-planned communities. But it was a longing to improve his hometown – and a belief that Salem deserved the kind of institutional-grade development he'd seen elsewhere – that drove him to spearhead The Cannery.

The site, once home to the Truitt Brothers Cannery, has been a cornerstone of Salem's industrial past since 1914. The Truitt family, who operated it from 1973 until its closure in 2019, left behind a legacy of community stewardship and a property ripe for reinvention. Michels, alongside development partner Dan Polanowicz – another West Point alum – saw an opportunity to bridge Salem's past and future.

"This isn't about cramming in density," Michels said. "It's about creating an economic engine for the Willamette Valley."





*Above: Phase 1 of the project centers on 382 multi-family units spread across three buildings rising 74 feet above a bustling industrial corridor.*

*Inset: Five stories over a concrete podium will feature a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, averaging 650 square feet, with townhouse-style units along the riverfront.*



Phase 1 of the project centers on 382 multi-family units spread across three buildings rising 74 feet above a bustling industrial corridor. Designed by Held Architecture, the structures – five stories over a concrete podium – feature a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, averaging 650 square feet, with townhouse-style units along the riverfront.

The first floor integrates parking and retail, while expansive amenity spaces crown each building: a wellness-themed pool deck with river views, a co-working hub, and a relaxation-focused terrace with kiosks for massages or salt spas.

"We've created themes for each building to foster different aspects of community life," said Kristina Held, president of Held Architecture.

Sustainability is a cornerstone of the design. The buildings' structural bones are mass plywood panels (MPP), a locally sourced innovation from Freres Engineered Wood in Lyons, just 20 minutes away. Unlike traditional timber, MPP utilizes smaller-diameter trees, a by-product of the veneer industry, allowing for efficient use of Oregon's forests.

"It's exciting because it's sustainable and local," Held said, noting the panels' contribution to rapid

construction and airtight, Passive House-level performance. Triple-glazed windows, solar panels, and geothermal systems further elevate the project's green credentials, aiming for top-tier certifications like Salmon-Safe and the National Green Building Standard's Emerald level.

For Michels and Polanowicz, the project is as much about placemaking as it is about construction. The site's two remaining river piers – relics of its cannery days – will become a food hall and marketplace, while the 1914 building transforms into a wine tasting room. A greenway will thread through the property, connecting to Riverfront Park and Minto-Brown





*Above: The first floor integrates parking and retail, as well as a wellness-themed pool deck with river views, a co-working hub, and a relaxation-focused terrace with kiosks for massages or salt spas.*

*Inset: The building's structure will be composed of mass plywood panels (MPP). Unlike traditional lumber, MPP utilizes smaller-diameter trees, a by-product of the veneer industry, allowing for efficient use of Oregon's forests.*

Island Park, softening the hard edge of Front Street's rail line and industrial spine.

"We're not just building buildings," Polanowicz said. "We're building a place with emotion, something that draws people together."

The construction process itself reflects this forward-thinking ethos. By opting for MPP over traditional stick framing, the team shaves nearly a year off the schedule, a critical factor amid rising interest rates and tariffs.


"Speed impacts financial viability," Michels added, crediting Held's innovative material choices and the

expertise of general contractor M&R Construction Group, civil engineers AKS Engineering & Forestry, and Stantec's structural and MEP team. The Truitt family's meticulous documentation has also smoothed land-use approvals, with zero community objections – a rarity for a project of this scale.

Yet challenges loom. The railroad bisecting Front Street complicates expansion, requiring negotiations over century-old easements. Economic headwinds, from tariffs to financing costs, demand constant adaptation. Still, Michels sees the project as a catalyst.

The Cannery is more than a job site – it's a testament to local ingenuity and collaboration. From Freres Wood's MPP to the Truitts' stewardship, this is, as Michels put it, "by Salem, for Salem."

As Phase 2 – still in planning – promises further growth, the project stands poised to redefine not just a riverfront parcel, but the future of a city ready to embrace its next chapter.

"Salem's downtown is evolving – malls fading, multi-family rising," Michels said. "We're connecting that vibrancy northward, making this an economic driver." 

# I-Build: *Building futures and strengthening the trades pipeline in Salem*



This past summer, something special happened in Salem – something that could help change the future of construction workforce development in Oregon.

I-Build, a hands-on youth construction program developed by The Salvation Army Kroc Center in partnership with Team Oregon Build, brought 24 Salem-Keizer Public Schools students together for eight intensive weeks of skill-building, job training, and community service.

These weren't your typical summer school students. Many had fallen behind academically or felt disconnected from traditional classrooms. But when given the chance to pick up a hammer instead of just a textbook, they showed up – every single one of them. Over the course of the program, they achieved 100 percent attendance while working together to build 12 sheds that will be converted into transitional shelters for Church at the Park, a local non-profit serving the unhoused.

"The biggest draw was credit recovery," said Tony Frazier, executive director of the Salem Kroc Center and the visionary behind I-Build. "But what they really found was purpose – and a path forward."

And that path is one the construction industry has been urgently trying to widen. With an aging workforce and a

growing demand for skilled trades, the labor shortage is no secret to contractors. I-Build is helping to fill that gap by introducing high school students to the trades in a real, tangible way. Participants earned OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR certifications, Oregon Employability Skills credentials, college credit for APR101 through Chemeketa Community College, and even math and English credit recovery.

The students also learned how to work as a crew, communicate on a job site, and handle real tools – lessons taught directly by professionals from Instruction Construction, a non-profit workforce development company that specializes in providing high-impact, hands-on training in the skilled trades.

## **Instruction Construction: Crafting the curriculum and skills for the future**

At the heart of I-Build's success was Instruction Construction, whose team of seasoned tradespeople developed the curriculum and provided daily on-the-job training. The organization is known for its commitment to creating skilled labor pathways for underserved communities by offering dynamic, hands-on training programs in construction, electrical work, carpentry, and other trades.





Founded with the goal of filling the gaps in workforce development, Instruction Construction partners with schools, community organizations, and government programs to offer practical training that meets the needs of today's construction industry. They believe in creating pathways to well-paying, long-term careers for individuals who may not have access to traditional vocational education.

For I-Build, Instruction Construction took the lead in designing a curriculum that was both educational and engaging. Instead of simply lecturing on construction theory, the organization focused on providing real-world, hands-on experience that students could immediately apply. Under the guidance of experts like Alex Olsen and Mark Atkinson, participants not only learned about construction techniques, but also practiced them on an active project – building sheds that would later be repurposed as transitional housing units for Church at the Park.

"Instruction Construction has been instrumental in shaping the I-Build program," Frazier said. "Their approach to teaching is dynamic and engaging. They get kids excited about building – not just as a job, but as a career they can be proud of."

### **A win-win for students and the community**

The impact of I-Build went beyond just the students. The 12 sheds constructed by the participants will be donated to Church at the Park, a local non-profit that works to serve the unhoused community in Marion and Polk Counties. This collaboration between the youth, the local church, and the contractors demonstrated the power of community involvement and the lasting impact of giving back.

Jose Lopez, 15, was one of those students who found a new direction through I-Build. Before the program, he was on the verge of dropping out of school. After completing I-Build, he enrolled in online schooling and now studies daily at the Kroc Center's education lounge.

"It helped me advocate for myself," Lopez said.

Abby Knight, 16, gained the confidence to apply for her first job in the construction industry.

"And I did it," she said. "I got the job."

Each participant graduated with a toolbelt – symbolizing not just the skills they learned, but the career opportunities ahead of them. During lunchtime, employers from the construction field visited the program to connect with students, share their experiences, and offer internships and job opportunities.


### **The trades are calling**

The construction industry has long faced labor shortages, but I-Build is working to change that. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, 2023 saw a 16 percent increase in students entering trade and vocational training and a 23 percent rise in construction program enrollment. As youth across the country increasingly look to vocational training over traditional college paths, programs like I-Build are opening doors to new opportunities and careers.

Jim Taylor, Team Oregon Build agency lead, summed up the program's mission: "The I-Build camp is a perfect representation of what we do – youth who are building skills, building homes, and supporting people in need in their local community."

Thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the Mountain West Center for Community Excellence, the program continues to grow. A new I-Build cohort began in October 2024, with even more students ready to develop their skills and begin their careers in construction.

"When you show young people that you care, they show up," Frazier said. "And when they feel like they have a place in the workforce, they thrive. That's how we build the next generation of tradespeople."

For contractors across Salem, this is an exciting opportunity to tap into a motivated, trained, and ready workforce. The future of construction is being built right now – with programs like I-Build creating the skilled tradespeople of tomorrow. 



# The SEDCOR Construction Alliance: *Building talent, communities, and a stronger region*

By Kip Morris, M.OLP, Economic Development Manager: Marion County, SEDCOR

The SEDCOR Construction Alliance (SCA) is a shining example of how local construction leaders can shape the economic and community landscape of Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley. Formed under the Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), the alliance brings together contractors, trades professionals, business owners, and educators with a shared purpose: to strengthen the workforce, support community needs, and lead with integrity.

## Vision and purpose

The construction alliance exists to promote economic resilience by supporting the development of a skilled workforce and addressing

unmet needs through service-based construction projects. Its members collaborate to provide career pathways for young people, tackle real infrastructure challenges, and ensure that construction remains a vital part of the region's long-term success.

## Workforce development and education

At the heart of the alliance's mission is the belief that workforce development begins with opportunity. The SCA partners with high schools in Marion and Polk counties to offer hands-on construction education, using curriculum aligned with the Industrial Maintenance Operator/Mechanic

(IMOM) program. Students learn practical skills while participating in community projects, gaining experience that leads directly to jobs with regional employers. This proactive approach helps address the skilled labor shortage and keeps talent rooted in the local economy.

## Signature projects and community impact

The SCA's projects reflect both compassion and craftsmanship:

- Gilbert House Children's Museum (2024-2025): When this beloved Salem institution faced critical structural issues, the construction alliance stepped in, conducting assessments, supporting funding



efforts, and organizing trades professionals and volunteers for repairs. The project will preserve an important educational site for generations of families.

- **Santiam Rebuild Coalition** (post-2020 wildfires): After the catastrophic wildfires, the SCA helped create and support the Santiam Rebuild Coalition. Members contributed materials, labor, and coordination to help fire-impacted families rebuild, including constructing storage sheds, ramps, and a new community center in Detroit. Their contributions reflect long-term commitment to regional resilience.
- **Discovery Pavilion at The Oregon Garden**: Partnering with Silverton and Stayton high school students, the SCA helped design and build a 1,300-square-foot open-air pavilion, blending education, public infrastructure, and community pride in one project.
- **HGTV School for the Deaf Project** – Salem: In one of its most visible projects, the construction alliance



played a supporting role in the HGTV renovation of the Oregon School for the Deaf. SCA members helped transform outdated spaces into welcoming, modern facilities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, broadcasting both the talent and heart of the region's construction professionals to a national audience.


### Recognition and leadership

In 2024, SCA member Juli Foscoli of South Town Glass received SEDCOR's Community Service Award for her leadership in advancing opportunities for women and youth in the trades. Her recognition exemplifies the alliance's culture of service and its focus on lifting up the next generation.

### Get involved: Join the alliance

The SEDCOR Construction Alliance is more than a network – it's a movement. Whether you're a contractor, supplier, educator, tradesperson, or service provider, there's a place for you in this growing coalition. Membership offers opportunities to shape regional projects, mentor future professionals, and make a lasting difference in your community.

Learn more and get involved today by visiting [www.sedcor.com/construction-alliance](http://www.sedcor.com/construction-alliance).

Together, we're not just building structures – we're building the future of Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley. 



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# A new blueprint for collaboration

## Salem's Meet the Prime event builds connections in construction

By Shayna Wiwierski

On a crisp February morning in 2025, the I-Build program at the Kroc Center in Salem buzzed with anticipation.

The Meet the Prime event, a first-of-its-kind gathering organized by the Salem Contractors Exchange (SCE) in partnership with Instruction Construction and the Kroc Center's I-Build program, drew 115 attendees, from industry giants to small subcontractors, to foster face-to-face connections in Oregon's construction sector. With booths lined up, the event marked a pivotal moment for Salem's construction community, blending networking with a commitment to social good.

Lori Cooley of the SCE had been wanting to plan an event inviting local subcontractors to meet and mingle with local general contractors. Juan Coronel, the entrepreneurial force behind Free Agents LLC and an affiliate of the SCE, is the one who had the connections to set the event in motion. Together, Cooley and Coronel envisioned a space where prime contractors – those holding major building contracts – could meet subcontractors, often relegated to bidding anonymously through digital platforms.

"A lot of times, they're just names on a bid list," Coronel said. "This event

let them shake hands, build trust, and see each other's faces."

The partnership with Instruction Construction and the Kroc Center's I-Build program underscored the event's dual mission: to strengthen industry ties while highlighting opportunities for the next generation.

"We chose this space intentionally," Coronel added. "It's a place doing good, and it let primes see the talent coming up in the trades."

The event's success hinged on a village of contributors. Sponsors like KARM Safety Solutions, Peterson Cat, Contractors Benefit Exchange, and Roth's Groceries fueled the day, providing everything from safety expertise to coffee and pastries. Major contractors, including Hoffman Construction, Howard S. Wright, CD Redding, Rich Duncan Construction, Dalke Construction, Anderson Construction, K&E Excavating, and more, set up booths, ready to meet subcontractors eager to bid on projects ranging from civic centers to commercial developments. The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) also made a notable appearance, amplifying the event's inclusive spirit.

For Salem's construction industry,



The event's impact rippled beyond the day. *Fox 12 Oregon* covered the gathering, spotlighting its role in promoting trade careers at a time when the industry seeks fresh talent.

Meet the Prime was a response to a pressing need: sustainability through relationships.

"It's about knowing who's out there," Coronel said. "A sub might be ready for bigger projects, or a prime might not know a local firm can handle the work."

By facilitating these introductions, the event aimed to streamline projects, enhance safety, and deliver on-time results – critical in an industry facing labor shortages and tight deadlines. The \$10 entry fee for subcontractors, which raised funds for the SCE's scholarship program, further tied the event to workforce development, supporting students pursuing trade careers.

The event's impact rippled beyond the day. *Fox 12 Oregon* covered the gathering, spotlighting its role in promoting trade careers at a time when the industry seeks fresh talent. Attendees, from subcontractors to primes, left with new contacts and a shared enthusiasm, prompting talks of making Meet the Prime an annual or biannual event.

"The feedback was overwhelmingly positive," Coronel said. "People were already asking, 'When's the next one?'"




Inspired by a similar Portland event, Coronel saw an opportunity to adapt the concept for Salem, leveraging the SCE's 75th anniversary to boost its visibility. Looking ahead, he and Cooley plan to expand the event's reach, potentially involving municipalities like ODOT or county agencies to connect public projects with local firms.

"We want to lean into those opportunities," Coronel said, emphasizing the event's potential to shape Salem's construction landscape.

As the industry evolves, Meet the Prime offers a blueprint for collaboration, proving that in Salem, building connections is as vital as building structures.

"I think it's important for conversations to be had so that way

we can focus on lean construction and what that looks like," Coronel said. "It's really important to the community and to our future." 

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