

Stephens & Smith Construction Company

Specializing In Foundations

- Commercial Foundations
- Residential Foundations
- Waterproofing
- Drain Tile
- Insulated Concrete Forms
- Concrete Pumping
- Epoxy Injection Crack Repair

Flatwork

- ACI Certified Finishers
- Commercial Flatwork
- Residential Flatwork
- Industrial Concrete
- Utility Concrete
- Prime Contracting
- Concrete Renovation
- Elevated Concrete Slabs
- Pervious Concrete

Specialty Products

- Gyp-Crete
- Acousti-Mat
- In-Floor Heating Systems
- Concrete Surface Prep
- Concrete Shotblasting
- Industrial Flooring
- Insulated Concrete Roof-decks

Decorative Concrete

- Stained Concrete
- Imprinted Concrete
- Concrete Polishing
- Concrete Countertops
- Decorative Concrete Walls
- Stenciled Concrete
- Colored Concrete
- Exposed Aggregate
- Lifetime Floors

A shining path to higher education

When students return to classes next fall at Iowa Western Community College's campus in Council Bluffs, Iowa, they will be on firm footing in their new student center thanks in part to Stephens & Smith Construction.

The 71,000-square-foot student center on the east side of campus will house the culinary arts department, a cafeteria, bookstore and campus library. It is the first step in expanding facilities that focus on health care careers at Iowa Western CC.

Cody Hillgren was the supervisor on the project, which involved employees from the Specialty Products Division. Typically, there were three to five employees working on the project.

The first phase of the student center involved curves, circles, ovals and other shapes in the floor. There were two landing areas at the building's entrance that were not enclosed. Once the weather turned cold and wet, Stephens & Smith

employees had to wait about two months for the area to be enclosed before proceeding.

"That's just the nature of the beast," Hillgren said. "You have to overcome the weather from time to time. We did."

Because of the weather delays, Stephens & Smith employees waited until the area was finally enclosed weeks later before finishing the project. The second phase of the project was completed in early April.

The new floor was completed by following a plan of how school officials wanted the shapes and designs to look, many connecting with similarly decorated carpet that had not yet been laid.

"They had an area mapped out with decorative ribbons and big circles," Hillgren said. "It was a challenge."

The finished product included four colors — light blue, patriot blue, walnut and sand. The floor then received a 1,500-grit polish.


Stephens & Smith also polished several stepped areas inside the building.

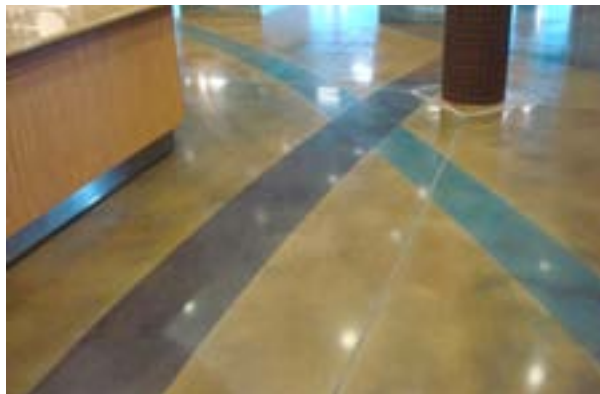
The final cleaning stages were in early May, and the new student center should be in full use later this summer.

Specialty Products employees overcame other challenges, including scheduling conflicts with other contractors completing their work, including window installers and carpet layers.

Lueder Construction of Omaha was the general contractor for the project.

Jim Romano, field superintendent for Lueder Construction, said he has nothing but respect for Stephens & Smith employees, with whom he has worked on other projects.

"They're very professional, and on this project, they went above and beyond to make the client happy," he said. "They always step up and do what they have to do to give the client what they want. They're a great group." 



Intricate patterns in the floor connected with patterns in the dining area's carpet.



Cody Hillgren puts some finishing touches on the student center's cafeteria floor.

Excellence in Aurora

Gary Peters remembers his company's first project like it was yesterday, even though it was 14 years ago.

"It was a custom home for a longtime friend," he recalled. "It was the beginning of a new direction for me."

Involved in the building industry since 1988, Peters founded G.E. Peters Inc. in 1996, and has been on an upward path since, helping his company expand and become a significant player in the Nebraska home building community.

So far, the company's largest projects were two almost identical, 49-unit apartment projects in Sidney, Neb., in 2006, and in Gillette, Wyo., in 2008 — both working with Stephens & Smith Construction, which poured the foundations for both projects.

G. E. Peters and Stephens & Smith continue to partner on various projects, and Peters looks forward to continuing that partnership indefinitely.

"They do fine work," he said. "When you have someone dependable, you want to keep that going."

As a college student, Peters went to work as a draftsman at the now-defunct Interstate Structures Inc., which specialized in steel commercial building projects in Lincoln and Kearney.

But by the mid-1990s, he had other plans.

"It was just time to venture out on my own," he recalled. "I had been working for someone else long enough. Aurora had a good market residentially, and it was my hometown. It was a good fit all the way around."

Peters' interest in building developed at an early age. Growing up on a farm, he often would help his father with various building and maintenance projects, so he became adept at working with his hands.

"Like any kid, I liked to tinker around, and I had always helped out here and there with carpenter summer jobs," he said. "Working with my hands is something that always interested me."

After graduating high school, Peters enrolled at what was then Kearney State College — now the University of Nebraska-Kearney — to focus on pre-architecture. He earned his degree in industrial distribution, and continued with Interstate Structures Inc. before starting his own company in 1996.

Peters and Jessie McCoy, his project manager who has been with the company for 2 1/2 years, comprise G. E. Peters Inc. For now, the two-person operation works well. Because almost all of their work is subcontracted, Peters has no immediate plans to expand his two-man staff.



Gary Peters

"In a town of 4,000 people, we see large swings in volume of work," he said. "Expansion is never a huge issue for us. We can handle a lot of work between the two of us."

While Peters is reluctant to predict what the future holds for the home-building industry, one thing he knows for sure is that he plans to maintain his partnership with Stephens & Smith for as long as possible.

"Stephens & Smith has always been a great partner," he said. "Their employees are committed to doing a great job, and that shows in the final products. They do what needs to be done to satisfy the client, and they do it professionally and in a timely manner." ❏

"Like any kid, I liked to tinker around, and I had always helped out here and there with carpenter summer jobs. Working with my hands is something that always interested me."

— Gary Peters

A shine in every aisle

When shoppers in Omaha's newest Hy-Vee supermarket begin searching for grocery bargains in the coming weeks, their money-saving journeys will be taken on a high-quality floor courtesy of Stephens & Smith Construction.

The new 84,000-square-foot Hy-Vee grocery store and accompanying convenience store/gas station, located at 144th Street and Stony Brook Boulevard in Omaha, received a salt and pepper aggregate exposure polished to a high gloss.

Jesse Morris was the Specialty Products supervisor on the project. He and his crew filled all the joints and polished the floors of both buildings. Total completion took four weeks, during the last of which Morris and two others handled the bulk of the work.

"Things went smoothly, other than a few scheduling conflicts with other contractors," Morris said. "But those were easily overcome."

Mindful of the other tradesmen and contractors working on the project, Stephens & Smith Crews worked in phases, day and night, to finish the job.

Hy-Vee Weitz Construction, based in Des Moines, Iowa, was the project's general contractor. Pat O'Neil, onsite supervisor for Hy-Vee Weitz, said he was impressed with Stephens & Smith crews.

"They did a great job out there," he said. "They were always mindful of all the safety rules and they stayed on track with the schedule. They are very professional, and we always love working with them."

The store is expected to bring 200 new jobs to Omaha, according to Hy-Vee officials. ❏



Omaha's newest Hy-Vee at 144th Street and Stony Brook Boulevard was one of many recent Stephens & Smith projects, where shoppers will travel up and down a Stephens & Smith floor to find their grocery bargains.



Jason Miller, left, of Stephens & Smith Construction, helps a student with her decorative concrete sample.



Building for the future

For a few hours one night in May, children stuck their hands in wet concrete, pounded nails, cut metal with an acetylene torch, got dirty and even helped operate heavy construction equipment.

And their parents loved it.

The annual Construction Fair May 5 at Lincoln Northeast High School again attracted visitors of all ages to learn more about the construction industry and get hands-on experience with a variety of equipment and tools.

As in years past, Stephens & Smith Construction employees participated in the annual spring event, which is a joint project between the Cornhusker Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors and Lincoln Public Schools.

Employees helping with this year's event included Roger Andersson, Kent Baker, Rick Goeden, Ted Gibson, Haider Kazem, James Linnemann, Jason Miller and Josh Phillips.

Students gathered at Lincoln Northeast High School to learn more about the construction industry and its employment opportunities. A variety of outdoor and indoor events allowed elementary, middle school and high school students to try out a variety of tools and operate construction equipment.

Stephens & Smith and other area contractors volunteered their time and services to answer questions and demonstrate construction equipment.

Visitors to the fair were given a checklist of each station at the event. Once a student visited a station, their checklist was signed by the volunteers at that station, and a completed checklist at the end of the night earned a free T-shirt.

The event also featured a competition between five teams from Lincoln high schools. The team from Lincoln Southeast High School, led by Industrial Technology Instructor Aaron Svik, won the competition for the third consecutive year. Each team member received a \$50 gift certificate to Menard's.


Miller looks forward to the event each spring.

"I've been coming for four or five years, and I always have fun," he said. "The kids love it, and we all have a great time, too."

At the Stephens & Smith station, students troweled concrete in a wooden frame and decorate it to their taste. Some add color, others make hand prints, designs or write their name, and some do a little of everything. Samples are allowed to dry overnight, and the students pick them up the next day.

Getting students interested in the construction trade at an early age is important, Miller said.

Miller recalled a woman who brought an infant to the fair a couple years ago. She wanted her child's footprints in a concrete sample for a keepsake, but was afraid of dropping her baby in the wet mix. Miller stepped in, holding the child above the sample while the woman pressed his feet to make a lasting impression, which no doubt will be kept for decades.

"It's things like that which make the Construction Fair a special event," he said. "Interacting with the public and seeing the smiles on the kids' faces makes it well worth the time." 

Flatwork employees earn ACI certification


Stephens & Smith employees continue to enhance their knowledge of and expertise in the concrete industry, enabling them to better serve customers.

Recently, Stephens & Smith Flatwork employees were re-certified as flatwork finishers through a program offered by the Nebraska chapter of the American Concrete Institute. Stephens & Smith also provided equipment for polishing during the certification training in January.

The ACI certification took place at the annual Quality Concrete Conference. Along with the certification program, the two-day conference included live demonstrations, seminars, speakers, vendors, suppliers and manufacturers — all of which related to the concrete industry.

The certification program consists of studying issues, methods, means, materials and standards of concrete construction in a class format and then passing a 50-question test. Experience is verified by ACI.

Of the more than 40 employees of Stephens & Smith's Flatwork Division, 14 are ACI-certified finishers.

"We are very proud of the fact we have that many people who dedicate themselves to the trade and want to be at the top of their craft," said Gary Ebert, vice president-Commercial Flatwork. "It is a win-win situation for the employer, employee, owner of the project and the industry." 



Stephens & Smith Construction Company

HTI expansion almost complete

With the help of Stephens & Smith Construction, a Lincoln plastics manufacturer's expansion is on schedule.

When HTI Plastics, 5120 NW 38th St., needed a solid base for its facility expansion, as well as some renovations to existing buildings, it called on Stephens & Smith, which worked closely with Schwisow Construction, the project's general contractor.

In February, after Stephens & Smith Flatwork crews poured 31,000 square feet of concrete, Specialty Products crews put the final touches on the addition's floor with a polished concrete, high-gloss finish, outlined with aggregate borders.


When fully operational this summer, the addition will house 28 induction molding machines. In addition to the expansion, existing facilities were renovated.

Gerardo Navaro, foreman, said the project went smoothly. Initially, Stephens & Smith crews had not planned on grinding the floor, but after a sample was presented to HTI, it was decided to use larger rocks in the finish.

"This pushed things back a little, but it was minor," Navaro said. "In the end, they were very happy with the finished product, so it was time well-spent."

Don Wilcox, Schwisow Construction's onsite supervisor, has worked with Stephens & Smith crews for more than 10 years. He said he is never disappointed.

"They're always very accommodating, and I don't think you'll find a better bunch of guys," he said.

Founded in 1985, HTI Plastics specializes in the design and production of a variety of custom and proprietary thermoplastic injection molded products. The company has 80 employees. 



HTI's finished space will be fully operational this summer.



Crews polish the addition at HTI Plastics.



This newsletter appears under the direction of Stephens & Smith Construction Company, Inc. For news coverage, call Chuck at the newsletter office at 402-475-6397, fax 402-475-6398, mail information to 1845 S 11th St, Lincoln, NE 68502-2211 or e-mail chuck@newslink.com. This newsletter is intended to be an overview of Stephens & Smith Construction Company, its employees and products. Any discrepancies between this newsletter and any other official Stephens & Smith literature, price list or descriptions, those documents govern. Stephens & Smith Construction Company continues to maintain the right, at any time, to alter, suspend, discontinue or terminate all plans and programs described in this newsletter. Thanks to everyone at Stephens & Smith Construction Company who took the time to contribute to this newsletter, including, but not limited to, Darrell Brown, Gary Ebert and Beki Ferguson.

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The Eagle Park basketball court, finished and ready for play, courtesy of Stephens & Smith Construction.




The concrete surface of the new Eagle Park basketball court is poured.

Stephens & Smith with the assist

A few days of work will result in years of play for basketball enthusiasts in Eagle.

Stephens & Smith's Flatwork Division recently completed work on a new outdoor basketball court in Eagle Park, 600 D St. in Eagle, just east of Lincoln. The project was completed in just four days.

With the arrival of warmer, dryer weather, the court already has gotten a lot of use.

Stacie Jensen, the project's supervisor, said the project went smoothly. 

Check out our Web site at: <http://www.stephensandsmith.com/>