



### Up & Coming

March/April 2008

### Networking for Leadership

Denver contractor helps launch new identity for Young Constructors Forum

**C**onstructor spoke with Haselden Construction's Matthew Proehl, 2007 Chair of the Construction Leadership Council, in mid-February in Denver. In his tenure as national leader, Proehl has led a renewed push by AGC to reach out to young industry talent across the country.

**Constructor:** Why did you choose a career in construction?

**Proehl:** The challenge, the ability to wake up each morning to a new set of variables and issues and work through them to create a project that I'm proud of. The most satisfying part of my job is being able to drive down the road and point to past projects and say, "I built that."

**Constructor:** What has been the biggest part of your learning curve so far?

**Proehl:** Taking a project with multiple personalities and bringing them together to form a productive team. Partnering sessions have been an invaluable part of most of the projects I've been involved with. Communication is the backbone of every project. Starting the project by stating the goals and getting buy-in from the whole team has been by far the most valuable tool I've learned.

**Constructor:** What do you like most about your job?

**Proehl:** The variety of tasks and projects I encounter on a daily basis. Haselden provides me with the freedom to take on more than just a project manager's role. They are firm believers in continuing education and giving back to the community, like a project we're working on now called the Colorado State University renovation.

We're taking the lead in creating a new learning environment at CSU. The around-\$3-million project is 100% donated with in-kind services from a number of local general contractors and subcontractors. We will also be pulling in some of the CSU [construction management] interns to work on it. We are remodeling one of the oldest buildings on campus, circa 1880, to create a state-of-the-art preconstruction lab and classrooms for the Construction Management Department while keeping the exterior in its original state.

**Matthew Proehl**  
Project Manager  
Haselden Construction  
Centennial, Colo.



General contractor  
320 employees  
\$243 million in revenue, 2007  
Among top 10 Colorado GCs

Age: 38

Education: Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colo.  
B.S., Construction Management, 1994

Experience: 16 years in construction:  
two years as a field engineer, five years  
as a superintendent, nine years as a  
project manager, one of those with  
Haselden

AGC Service: 2007 National Chair of  
Construction Leadership Council  
(formerly the Young Constructors  
Forum), 2003 Chair of Colorado Young  
Constructors

Hobbies: Traveling, hunting, fishing and  
riding my Harley

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**Constructor:** What's the toughest project you've worked on?

**Proehl:** The Medical Center of the Rockies. It's a \$150-million, 600,000-sq-ft, Level 2 trauma hospital in Loveland, Colo. At the time, the project was the second LEED-Silver hospital in the nation. It was tightly regulated and included infection control and required attention to many details.

**Constructor:** How much BIM or virtual construction experience have you had?

**Proehl:** BIM is the future of designing, coordinating and estimating projects. I have used BIM (REVIT software) on my last two projects. Each one was an over-50,000-cu-yd, multi-story concrete structure. By using BIM for detailing formwork lift drawings, we were able to move quickly through the shop-drawing process and eliminate large amounts of rework normally experienced on large, technical concrete structures. The biggest challenge to mainstreaming BIM is standardizing the software language. Integrating the program into a company is also a substantial investment and, more times than not, it seems that the design team is using a different program that's not compatible.

**Constructor:** What are the biggest challenges facing the industry?

**Proehl:** As the older generation of craftsmen move toward retirement, the biggest challenge is bringing in quality, young craftsmen. The booming economy has eroded the apprentice and training programs needed to develop truly skilled workers. With the fast-paced schedules of most projects, many workers can walk on a jobsite and call themselves whatever trade they want and be hired on the spot.

**Constructor:** What trades are most in need of trained people?

**Proehl:** All of them—masons, electricians, mechanical subs and so on. We are seeing it across the board. It's a huge challenge to get trained workers.

**Constructor:** What are you doing as a young AGC industry leader to help solve those problems?

**Proehl:** We have made industry recruitment a priority on both the local and national levels. While serving on the Future Leaders Forum within AGC Colorado, we produced a video and presentation that was, and still is, taken to the various high schools in the Denver area to show how rewarding a career in construction can be.

**Constructor:** How are AGC's programs helping to develop trained young constructors?

**Proehl:** On the national level, we've created a scholarship funded through the Construction Leadership Council. It's a cash scholarship worth \$2,500 a year that can be used for tuition, books, housing and living expenses. It can be used at every U.S. college or university with a construction management program. Students can apply online through the AGC Website, [agc.org](http://agc.org).

There's also a link to all of the AGC scholarships at the Website. AGC has 100 scholarships ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500 for undergraduates. For graduate students, there are the Saul Horowitz, Jr. Memorial and Heffner scholarships.