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News and Events

Pinnacle Stars Light Up 2009 Convention

The 2008 Carolinas AGC Pinnacle Awards were presented for 3 companies and 3 construction projects at the 88th Annual Carolinas AGC Convention January 16th in Palm Beach, FL.

The CAGC Pinnacle Awards competition is co-sponsored by CPA firm Greer & Walker and the law firm of Johnston, Allison & Hord.

Congratulations to the following winners of the 2008 Carolinas AGC Pinnacle Awards.

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Top row, L to R: Chuck Lentz of winner Linbeck Group; Jonathan Mangels of sponsor Greer & Walker; John Breshears of winner DS Simmons; CAGC Board Chair Mike Murphy; Gary Welch of sponsor firm Johnston Allison & Hord; Richard Nickel of winner Carolina Bridge. Bottom row: Drew Hancock of winner Frank L. Blum; Dan Dennis of winner Dennis Corp.; Andy Clark of winner Clark Pavement Marking.

Best General Contractor:
Frank L. Blum Construction Co., Winston-Salem, NC



Best Subcontractor/Specialty Contractor
Clark Pavement Marking, Inc., Apex, NC



Best Supplier/Service Company:
Dennis Corporation, Columbia, SC



Best Building Project (2 Awards Given)

Chapman Cultural Center, Spartanburg, SC
Linbeck Construction Corporation, Spartanburg, SCC



NC Center for Advancement of Teaching, Ocracoke, NC
DS Simmons, Inc., Goldsboro, NC



Best Highway-Heavy Project
NC 12 Bridge Replacements, Ocracoke Island, NC
Carolina Bridge Co., Orangeburg, SC



Best General Contractor

Frank L. Blum Construction Co. is an \$80 million firm targeting markets of healthcare, higher education and private schools, research labs, retirement communities, religious and not-for-profit facilities. Its 90 employees are based in Winston-Salem.

A subcontractor noted that Frank L. Blum "really deserves this award—many GC's don't try to 'mentor,' but they really do." One customer said they were "wowed" when the Blum firm brought along virtually the whole company to bid a job, to demonstrate the depth of its commitment. From another: "Words I would use to describe Frank L. Blum: Professional, ethical, clear, thorough, helpful, trustworthy, responsible..."



The Pinnacle judges gave Frank L. Blum top marks in contribution to industry and community and noted its exemplary treatment of employees.

Last year Frank L. Blum Construction Co. won a Pinnacle Award for Best Building Project. The firm has been a member of Carolinas AGC since 1944— 65 years of membership!

[Find out more about this general contractor.](#)

Best Subcontractor/Specialty Contractor link:

Clark Pavement Marking, Inc. is a 20-year-old \$9 million firm specializing in pavement markers and pavement marking & sealing. Its 60 employees serve most markets across North and South Carolina, with a fleet of over 50 vehicles.



General contractor references noted that Clark is "simply the best," and they "use them over any other competitor every time price allows- they're just great." Another said that when Clark is supposed to be on a job at 4:00 AM, "they're not there at 4—they're there at 3:45 AM."

Judges also cited the firm's longstanding emphasis on safety and employee professional development, as well as its commitment to the advancement of new technologies.

President and owner Andy Clark won a round of applause from the 350 guests when he planted a big kiss on the firm's Pinnacle Award.

This year rings in Clark Pavement Marking's 20th year as a Carolinas AGC member firm—they joined the same year the company was founded.

[Find out more about Clark Pavement Marking.](#)

Best Supplier/Service Company link:

Dennis Corporation is a 3 year-old civil engineering, surveying and construction management firm. It has grown to about \$4.5 million in that short time. Its 4 offices in addition to its Columbia home base house a total of about 80 employees.

One customer described the Dennis Corporation "as straight-up as 12 o'clock." From another: "Extremely customer-oriented... their fast growth is a result of the quality of their work."

And a subcontractor reference appreciated the firm's thoroughness and attention to details, having bid on several jobs where Dennis did the plans... making bidding easier and more accurate.



Dennis Corporation's win marks the first time that an engineering firm has won a Pinnacle Award.

The firm has been a Carolinas AGC member for over 2 years— [find out more.](#)

Best Building Project link: (2 Awards Given)

1. **Chapman Cultural Center, Spartanburg, SC**
GC: **Linbeck Construction Corporation, Spartanburg, SC**



At 87,000 square feet, the Chapman Cultural Center houses a dance center, art and pottery studios, science center, reptile room, 500-seat auditorium, art & history museums, gift shop, and offices. Each of its 3 buildings is designed for a different use, presenting Linbeck with challenges of coordinating construction for each space and use.

The project owner, the Arts Partnership of Greater Spartanburg, was sensitive to the project being financed largely by private donations, and aggressively sought cost-cutting ideas. Linbeck regularly identified and presented savings opportunities as they occurred. The result was an ever-changing and evolving design, right up to the on-schedule completion.

Linbeck earned kudos from the community by its use of "lean construction" techniques. In addition, this GC took great pains to involve the community by offering weekly site tours, a weekly update in the local newspaper, and hanging local schoolchildren's artwork on the site fencing.

Get more information on [Linbeck](#) or the [Chapman Cultural Center](#).



2. **NC Center for Advancement of Teaching, Ocracoke, NC**
GC: **D.S. Simmons, Inc., Goldsboro, NC**



This \$8 million project challenged DS Simmons to completely renovate a World War II-era Coast Guard Station located on the remote Ocracoke Island, accessible only by ferry.

The scope of work included all major structural repairs, including: a new elevator tower and modifications to existing elevator towers; all new interior & exterior finishes; roofing, doors and windows; special spray foam insulation; new masonry and composite siding; and new parking, water and sewer.

Wrinkles such as lead paint, asbestos, soil chemical contamination, and fuel tanks were handled in stride by DS Simmons—including the severe flea infestation traced to a colony of feral cats residing under the building. The firm's solution: hiring the superintendent's dog from Goldsboro. His services were impeccable and he worked for mere (dog) bones.

A challenge not so easily overcome was the sheer remoteness of this job site. All shipments of equipment and materials were significantly limited in size, weight and of course frequency. Because of limited labor availability, the firm had to self-perform much work. Plus, ferry schedules were severely affected by the weather over the 16 months of construction, impacting equipment delivery, delivery of workers and of course delivery of inspectors. Also, the only road to or from the site would flood during "Nor-easters", trapping workers on an island where only one restaurant remains open year-round.



Get more information on [DS Simmons](#) or [NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#).

Best Highway-Heavy Project:

- NC 12 Bridge Replacements, Ocracoke Island, NC**
Carolina Bridge Co., Orangeburg, SC



This \$8 million project—replacing 7 timber bridges with 6 new concrete bridges and a twin culvert— took years to plan, but called for completion in just 74 days. Carolina Bridge delivered in a mere 6 weeks!

Because the site on Ocracoke Island was accessible only by boat or plane, 750 truckloads of equipment and materials had to be brought entirely by ferry. And, other than the northern and southernmost bridges, Carolina Bridge had no access to the individual job sites without crossing bridges that were to be replaced.



Disruption of NC 12 as the main route on and off the island was of course a major concern for Ocracoke's 700 residents. It was decided that a 75-day road closure during the tourism off-season was the best way to proceed. During the harsh winter period, the only traffic management alternative was along a 3-mile route directly on the beach, for four-wheel drive vehicles only.



Because of the project's remote location and compressed time frame, NCDOT elected to use 100% precast bridge elements-- a first for this owner. Carolina Bridge's own innovations included several changes to the original plans, such as: driving pile for the far ends of the new bridges two months early, since the new bridges was to be longer than the originals; and redesigning the barrier rail to be cast on exterior cored slabs prior to shipping, which eliminated field erection of 244 pieces.

NCDOT's Chief Engineer has called this project the best example of coordination he had ever seen. With 5 crews working 24/7, safety was a huge concern; yet neither Carolina Bridge nor its subcontractors reported any lost-time injuries.

[Get more information on the Carolinas AGC Pinnacle Awards.](#)

Nominations for the 2009 competition will open in June.

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1100 Euclid Avenue - Charlotte, NC 28203 | P.O. Box 30277 - Charlotte, NC 28230-0277
Phone (704) 372-1450 | Fax (704) 332-5032 | Email: swalters@carolinasagc.org
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