



**Strong leadership:** Jamie Godwin (left) and Erik Powell

# 40 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION EXCELLENCE

Stevens-Leinweber marks anniversary by recommitting to quality and service

**C**reating a successful corporate culture can be elusive. For Phoenix-based Stevens-Leinweber Construction (SLC), its values are not only the cornerstone of four decades of growth, they are the catalyst that continues to push the general contractor forward, allowing it to expand into new local market sectors, maintain enviable industry relationships and attract generations of family members.

"Our company is built on 40 years of promises made and promises kept," says Jamie Godwin, president,

CEO and owner of SLC. "When you operate this way, there are endless opportunities to modernize and improve, but the basic approach doesn't change. Our anniversary tagline is, 'Hard Work, Handshakes, Projects and Partnerships.' That is truly the foundation of who we are, how we've risen to success and how we'll continue to succeed."

Godwin joined SLC in 2014 with an understanding that he would acquire the business through a multiyear purchase agreement. In 2017, he executed the company's launch

beyond its tenant improvement (TI) roots to include ground-up office and industrial construction.

In the years since, SLC has added more than 4 million square feet of Class A ground-up development to its existing Arizona portfolio of more than 8,500 completed TI jobs. It has millions of additional square feet of ground-up construction in the pipeline and a solid book of tenant improvement work that extends into 2022 and beyond.

"It's a story of, 'Good things happen to good people,'" says Mark Leinweber, one

of the company's founders. "When you approach business with good intentions, you get good outcomes in return."

## PROUD BEGINNINGS

Stevens-Leinweber was formed in 1981 by Leinweber and Mike Stevens. At the time, the pair were coworkers at a private development company that was struggling from an economic downturn. Unsure if their employer could weather the headwinds, Stevens and Leinweber decided to strike out on their own.

Their first job was a TI assignment from their previous employer. It put their fledgling company on a path of work that would quickly become its bread-and-butter.

"I never dreamed I would end up being a tenant improvement contractor, but the door was there and we walked into what became a specialty construction service in the Valley," Leinweber recalls. "We worked hard for what we earned, but it was also being in the right place at the right time."

At the time, general contractors who specialized in TIs were nonexistent, though this type of work became more common for architects and builders during the 1980s. "We assumed that one day we would move into ground-up construction, but after a few years of doing TIs and refining our approach and systems, we started getting really good at it," Stevens says. "We became one of the very first general contractors in

Phoenix who specialized in tenant work and an industry leader in this niche."

About eight years into the business, SLC was offered an 80,000-square-foot job for Catholic Healthcare West, now known as Dignity Health. "That was a challenging job that a couple of our competitors turned down, but we completed it successfully, and it demonstrated our ability to deliver large projects," Stevens comments. "We still have Dignity Health as a regular client. That means a lot to us."

Stevens and Leinweber built SLC with an emphasis on honesty and integrity — principles that remain the foundation of the company to this day. "When it came to their daily work, Mike and Mark solved problems person-to-person and made their word their bond," Godwin says. "In a world full of changes and challenges, building mutual trust with employees, subcontractors and vendors allowed them to keep their projects on track and on target for completion. It is the same philosophy we apply today, with the same level of success."

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After decades leading the business, Stevens and Leinweber began contemplating how they were going to exit the company, hoping to find someone with their same level of integrity, skill and work ethic to lead SLC into the future.

They met Godwin through a series of project assignments and were impressed.



**Mike Stevens**  
Executive vice  
president / founder



**Mark Leinweber**  
Founder / retired

After the jobs were completed, they approached him with an offer to come on board and eventually take over management and ownership.

"Jamie was the only person I knew who was capable of maintaining our company with the standards and philosophy we worked more than 35 years to create. It was a seamless transition," Leinweber notes. "When I retired and left the company, nobody missed me. That's what I call a successful succession plan."

Godwin also possessed the market knowledge needed to run a firm like SLC. He worked in, and eventually led, the design-build division of Opus West's Phoenix office for almost 13 years before the Great Recession of 2008 hit. He was also the co-founder and co-owner for five years of RSG Builders before being tapped to join SLC.

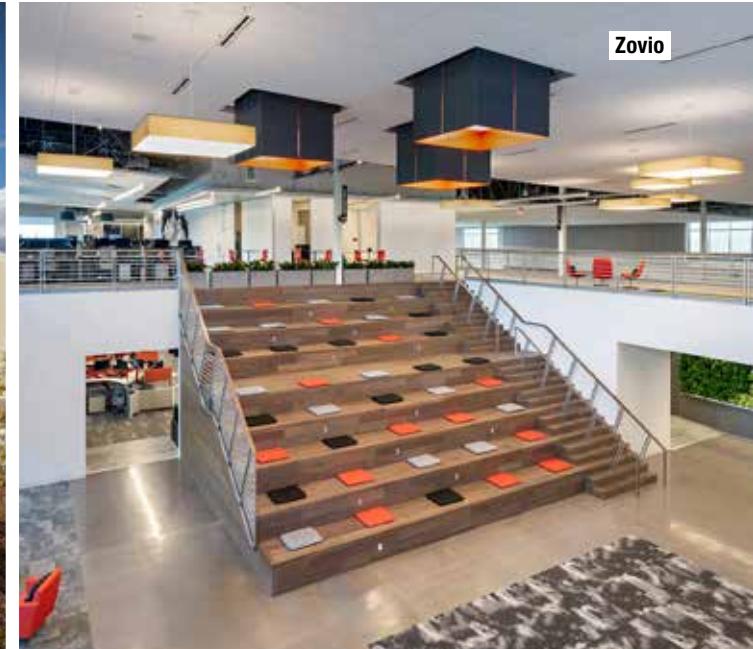


**Boeing XPO**



**EIDE BAILLY**

**Eide Bailly**



"The decision to leave RSG for this new opportunity was a considerable one but, in the end, I chose the offer from Mike and Mark," Godwin says. "The opportunity to lead and grow such a stellar, established company was just too good to pass up."

Godwin has been the sole owner of SLC since 2018.

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

With Godwin at the helm, SLC has evolved into a full-service general contractor that provides both ground-up and tenant improvement services. A significant milestone in that evolution was the addition of Erik Powell, now vice president at SLC, who was brought on board to launch the company's ground-up division. Powell believes that SLC's strong foundation contributes to its continued success.

"As a company, we were fortunate to hit the market at the right time," Powell says. "Arizona's industrial sector is booming, and it has grown our industrial ground-up activity faster than anyone could have expected."

The biggest challenge, Powell says, has been adapting to a rapidly evolving local economy. "We're currently running more than 3 million square feet of new construction at any given time," he explains. "But we have the

right teams in place, and we give them the freedom to succeed from project management to field supervisors to our subcontractors."

Godwin adds that, in 2021, revenues from Powell's division will surpass that of the TI wing of the company for the first time. "It's an indicator that our corporate philosophy works across the board, whether for

by COVID-19 encouraged Godwin to evaluate the present state of his company and more carefully consider his growth plan for the coming years.

This analysis culminated in a three-year vision document that defined the 'SLC Experience' and outlined how the firm will bring that experience to life. Leading the list was a pledge to continue SLC's corporate culture, in which personal and professional employee growth is supported and hard work is rewarded. For clients, the SLC Experience involves white-glove treatment that culminates in tangible value. For subcontractors, it's a promise to provide the highest level of safety, profitability and job experience. For the community, it's a call to serve and give faithfully through acts of philanthropy that improve the lives of those in need.

With these commitments always top of mind, Godwin feels bullish about the years ahead. "We've successfully navigated a pandemic, and we operate in what is now the nation's fastest growing city," he says. "This is absolutely the place to be as the market recovers."

Godwin adds, "We don't need SLC to be the biggest, but we do want to be the best at everything we do. That's something that lies deep within our DNA, and we'll continue to apply that standard in this exceptional market." ■■■

## SLC BY THE NUMBERS

**40** YEARS IN BUSINESS

**8,500+**  
PROJECTS COMPLETED

**60+** EMPLOYEES

tenant improvement or ground-up construction," he says. "Both specialties have now become part of our story, and we continue to grow in the volume and level of sophistication that we deliver on both fronts."

## DEDICATION TO QUALITY

As was the case for so many other businesses, the disruptions caused

# 4 QUESTIONS WITH JAMIE GODWIN

President and CEO Jamie Godwin joined Stevens-Leinweber Construction (SLC) in 2014 and has been the sole owner since 2018.

**Q: What are you most proud of about SLC?**

**A:** I'm particularly proud of our diversification over the last five years so that we not only provide tenant improvement services but also ground-up construction. We've done this while maintaining the same approach and same culture of hard work and mutual respect that has been the hallmark of Stevens-Leinweber during its 40-year history.

**Q: What are SLC's greatest strengths? Its greatest opportunities for growth?**

**A:** Our greatest asset is our people. We depend on them every day, and they rise to the occasion. Our greatest opportunity for growth lies in market sectors that are complimentary to those areas in which we are



already active. Hospitality and medical are part of our strategic planning.

**Q: What is a surprising fact about SLC?**

**A:** Our entire executive leadership group is made up of individuals who have real estate development experience, so we understand what is important to our developer/owner clients.

**Q: What advice would you give to young people about starting a construction career?**

**A:** Do it. This is an extremely rewarding profession that creates environments in which people spend a significant amount of their time. What we do is very impactful to a lot of people.

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