



Elder-Jones
GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Construction Communicator

SPRING 2023



President's Corner

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE: THE OPEN STORE REMODEL

I remember overseeing my first open store remodel as a young 20-something project manager. Our company was busy with so much work, we were doing all we could just to keep up. I hadn't ever managed an open store remodel, and because we were so busy no one had time to prepare or properly train me on the unique facets surrounding this type of project. We also had a relatively inexperienced superintendent on the job. He was certainly capable but, like me, he hadn't been through this before. The project was a phased remodel/rebranding of a small wireless phone outlet. New paint, new carpet, a couple new rooms in the back of house, and new fixtures and furniture throughout. Seems simple enough, right? Let me tell you, from day one I felt like I had been thrown under the big top and into an unruly circus with a varied cast of diverse characters. Before we even got started, they all needed something from me, the reluctant ringmaster! We were way behind schedule before we even got started.

Sorry for the spoiler here, as I know you must certainly be on the edge of your seat imagining all the ways I am going to tell you this project spiraled out-of-control and we never worked for this customer again. Believe me, early on I thought this surely could be the only outcome. Luckily none of that happened, but it easily could have! I worked with a fantastic construction manager on the client side who had been through hundreds of these, and with his guidance and a little patience, we caught on quickly and by most accounts the project concluded successfully. The store manager was wonderful to work with, and she and our superintendent got along brilliantly. I learned a great deal from that project, and I learned it quickly! We went on to do over one hundred more of these remodels for this customer over the course of several years.

That was seventeen years ago, and not much has changed when it comes to open store remodels. One thing that has changed, is that we're a whole lot better at doing them now than we were back then. Just because we've gotten better doesn't mean they've gotten any easier. I asked a few of our project managers to tell me the first couple words or phrases that come to mind when they hear "open store remodel." A few of them said the first word that came

to mind is not appropriate for print in this newsletter, so there's that. Next, they mentioned preparation and coordination over and over. These are key elements of any construction project, however even more so with an open store remodel. One of our project managers mentioned that we are a guest in their house. That's an excellent way to think about it, and to be successful we must prepare and communicate with the understanding we are an inconvenience to their usual way of doing business. Conversely, the store team needs to understand we have a job to do (a sometimes-messy job), and it is our responsibility to prepare them and manage their expectations in a way that will allow them to continue operations.

Another word that came up was partnership. To be successful, we know

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WHO ARE WE

Elder-Jones, Inc. is headquartered in Bloomington, Minnesota, and provides nationwide general contracting services in 49 states, Puerto Rico, and Canada.

Our Bloomington office also serves as headquarters to our associated companies: Elder-Jones Building Permit Service and Elder-Jones Construction of Canada, ULC.

Providing Uncompromised Service Since 1971

President's Corner, Continued

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we need to put the right people in place who work well with others, and who can be good partners. The best results happen when a productive partnership forms between the client construction manager, store personnel, our superintendent, and our project manager. The store team needs to believe that we are doing everything we can to limit disruptions, as we understand their focus is on their business, not ours.

Gaining the trust of the store personnel is such a key element of project success, and really the same is true vice versa. We often rely on the store team for such things as de-merchandising, providing overnight security, shutting down systems, unlocking the store at a certain time, etc. These seem like small tasks, but on projects with tight schedules the timing becomes critical. Without good preparation and coordination amongst all parties, these things too can fall through the cracks and often can lead to a turbulent relationship.

I had fully intended to cover more topics related to open store remodels, but I now realize I could nearly write a whole textbook on the topic. Maybe I should and use it as a new training manual! Open store remodels make up an important fragment of our business. Continuing to challenge and educate ourselves to improve our open store processes will positively set us apart from our competitors. There are many other significant topics important to this type of project; I've only covered the tip of the iceberg here. Or should I say the tip of the big top? ~Justin Elder, President

Elder-Jones Company Meeting



Elder-Jones office and field employees recently gathered in Minneapolis for our bi-annual company meeting. We enjoyed a good mix of training, roundtable discussions, and speakers along with some fun doing go-karts, axe throwing, happy hour at the new office, and a nice dinner banquet to cap things off.

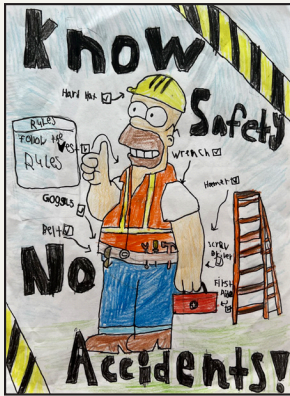


Spending quality time with field employees who have gathered together from all across the country is truly beneficial, and something we always look forward to.



2023 Safety Poster Contest

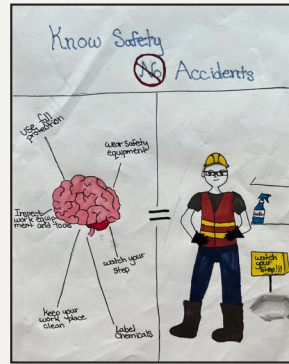
This year's safety poster contest grand prize winner is second-time winner, 12-year-old Samantha Ash, daughter of Elder-Jones senior project manager, Jason Ash. Samantha's winning design is a great display of this year's theme "Know Safety, No Accidents" and will hang on all Elder-Jones job sites to continually serve as a reminder to keep our projects safe and free from accidents. Many thanks to all those who participated in this year's contest! We received many fantastic entries in each age group, including some notable entries featured here.



Parker Ash, age 9
1st place winner, age group 7-9



Bensyn Mandelke, age 6
1st place winner, age group 4-6



Bristol Schiesser, age 11
2nd place winner, age group 10-12



Samantha, age 12
Grand prize winner & 1st place winner, age group 10-12

Elder-Jones Camaro Makes Debut



Elder-Jones' president, Justin Elder, wheeled his brand new Elder-Jones sponsored Camaro race car to a 3rd place finish in his 2023 debut at the SCCA Hoosier Super Tour event

at Sebring International Raceway this past January in Sebring, FL. Justin will be competing at tracks across the country such as Sebring, Road America, Blackhawk Farms, Brainerd International Raceway, and Circuit of the Americas.

The car competes in both SCCA in the GT2 class as well as in the TransAm Pro Series in the Big Machine Vodka TA2 class. This Camaro-bodied car is a Cope Race Cars-built tube frame chassis with a 530-hp Katech Chevrolet engine capable of top speeds around 180mph!



Get to Know Elder-Jones

It is important to know who you're working with, so we are once again helping you "get to know" a few of Elder-Jones' finest.



JAKE MURPHY – ASSISTANT PROJECT MANAGER

Jake has been an assistant project manager at Elder-Jones for a little over a year. He works mostly on projects with JD Sports and Affordable Dentures, and he has also jumped right into another unofficial role as one of the office celebration planners.

A favorite project of Jake's was the JD Sports at Scottsdale Fashion Square in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was the first project he was a part of from start to finish and he also really enjoyed working with Floyd Johnson, the site superintendent.

Jake grew up and still lives in Hastings, Minnesota. He attended De LaSalle High School in Minneapolis and is currently enrolled in the Construction Management program at Dakota County Technical College. He will be graduating this spring! He is the oldest of 13 siblings, with seven brothers and five sisters. He is an uncle to three nephews and one niece.

When he is not working or going to school, Jake enjoys spending time with his family and friends, cooking, and playing guitar.

THOMAS DARBY – FIELD SUPERINTENDENT

Thomas has been a field superintendent with Elder-Jones for over two years. He has worked on projects all over the United States and in Puerto Rico, including Alo Yoga, T-Mobile, Target, and Apple, just to name a few. His favorite project to date was the Alo Yoga in Palo Alto, California. It was a beautiful store with lots of attention to detail.

Thomas grew up in Maryland. His schooling includes nursing, sculpture, environmental biology, ecology, and the Institute of Construction. He raised two daughters on a Pennsylvania farm. They are both grown now and one is an assistant professor and the other a psychologist.

Miramar, Puerto Rico, is Thomas' current home base, along with his wife of 20 years, who is a fashion designer and model. In his free time, he enjoys exploring remote places and sailing Caribbean islands, dropping anchor in pristine coves.





LUCY XIONG – PAYROLL ACCOUNTANT

For a little over a year, Lucy has been a payroll accountant at Elder-Jones, as well as Shrader & Martinez. She oversees and processes payroll for both E-J and SMC, as well as manages and coordinates with vendors on employee benefit enrollment and changes throughout the year.

Lucy comes from a family of nine. She is number five of seven children! Most of her childhood she lived in Minneapolis and later moved to Brooklyn Park. She went to Champlin Park High School and went on to graduate from St. Cloud State University.

She currently lives in Apple Valley with her fiancé. They got engaged this past February and are planning a destination wedding for the fall of 2024. Lucy's dog, Teddy, takes up most of her free time. They go on walks/hikes when the weather is nice and try to teach him new tricks every few months! When she can, she enjoys reading contemporary romance and thriller books. Her current favorite book is *The Unhoneymooners* by Christina Lauren.

DEAN SCHRAGER – FIELD SUPERINTENDENT

Dean has been a field superintendent with Elder-Jones for almost a year. Most of the projects he has worked on have been with Allbirds, and they are his favorite because he has done two of them.

He grew up in Arlington Heights, Illinois, a northwest suburb of Chicago. He attended Forest View High School and then the University of Wisconsin, Platteville, where he majored in Building Construction Management. He has two boys, ages 23 and 19, and currently splits his time living in Elk Grove, Illinois, and Pompano Beach, Florida.

In his spare time, Dean enjoys golf, boating, and watching sports on TV.



Elder-Jones Across the Nation

Recently completed projects from around the country.



ALO YOGA Ft. Worth, TX

Superintendent: Nick Maresca & Jeff Welch | Project Manager: Jason Ash



BEST BUY Appleton, WI

Superintendent: Troy Williams | Project Manager: Drew Hirsch



APPLE West Des Moines, IA

Superintendent: Mike Sanchez | Project Manager: Colton Remakel



AFFORDABLE DENTURES Stockton, CA

Superintendent: Rich Carlton | Project Manager: Jay Saterbak



OLD NAVY Mason City, IA

Superintendent: Johnny Johnson | Project Manager: John Lundebrek



VAN LEEUWEN Darien, CT

Superintendent: Russ Johnson | Project Manager: Chris Bonello



BUCKLE Fenton, MO

Superintendent: Keith Kersey & Darrell Autry | Project Manager: John Lundebrak



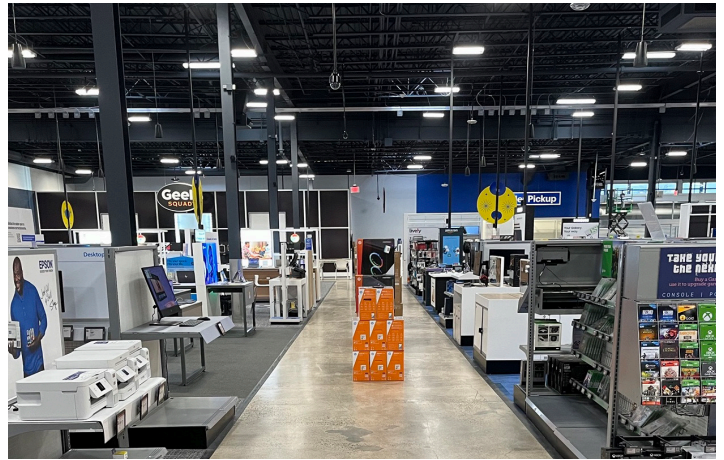
JD SPORTS Costa Mesa, CA

Superintendent: Terry Stull | Project Manager: Jay Saterbak



LOVESAC Cranston, RI

Superintendent: Bob Bailey | Project Manager: Ryan Callahan



BEST BUY Minnetonka, MN

Superintendent: Troy Williams | Project Manager: Drew Hirsch



VUORI Mall of America | Bloomington, MN

Superintendent: Wade Arms | Project Manager: John Lundebrak



OVME Edina, MN

Superintendent: Doug Gurholt | Project Manager: John Lundebrak

Happy Retirement, Cindy!



After 21 years with Elder-Jones, we are wishing Cindy Higgins farewell as she starts her new chapter of retirement. Cindy has long been E-J's expert in all things IT and we are so grateful for all her years of dedication and friendship. Cindy said, "my time at E-J was more than just a job; it was time spent working with my extended family. I am truly blessed to have had this opportunity to do what I loved at a company that stands out above all. I will miss being part of the day to day interaction but have friendships and cherished memories that will be with me forever. Thank you E-J for making this all possible!"

Dennis Hill, Cindy's longtime supervisor



Dennis & Cindy, at Cindy's recent retirement party



Dennis & Cindy, circa 2002



Cindy in her happy place, cruising the lake!

Cindy added that as much as she loved her job and working with everyone, she is looking forward to spending much more time outside the confines of a desk and computer, pursuing her interests in nature and animals. She said she is most excited for "the freedom to just get up and get outside whenever. From the beautiful sunrises enjoyed from our deck to getting out on the lake whenever the mood strikes."

We wish Cindy the very best in her retirement and asked her not to be a stranger!

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