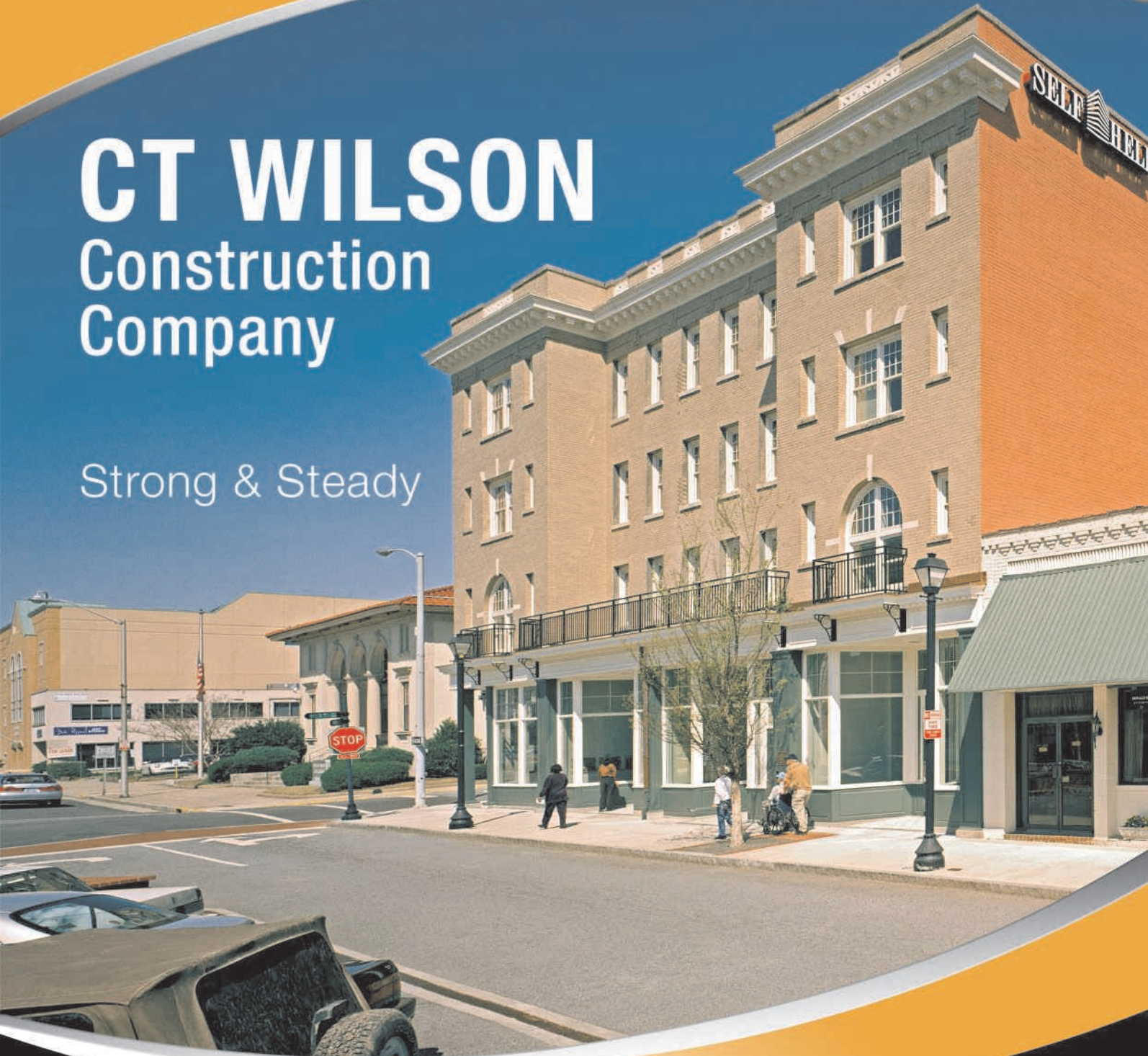


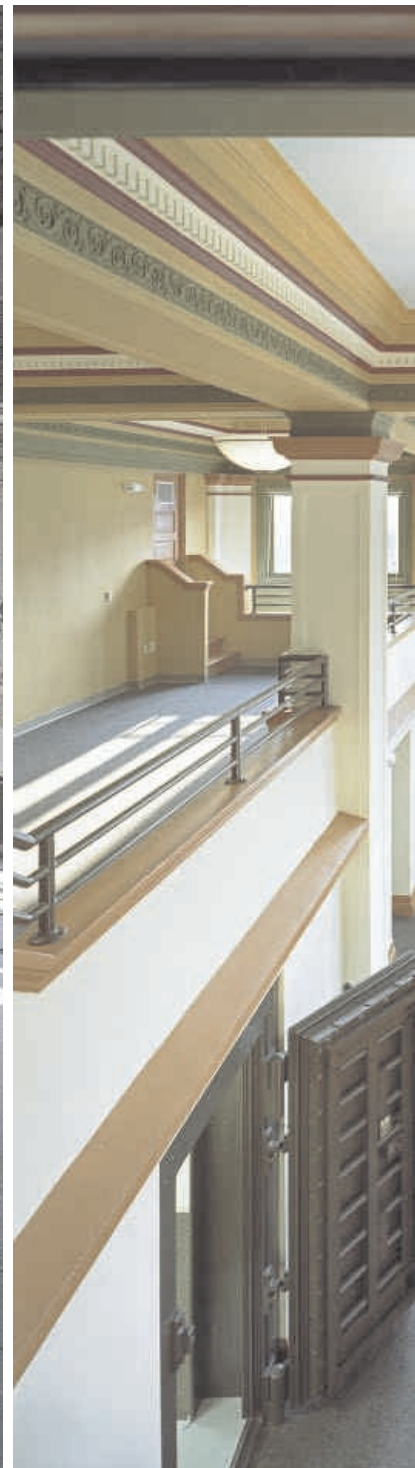
CT WILSON Construction Company

Strong & Steady





BEFORE



STRONG & STEADY

Constant and thoughtful growth has turned CT Wilson into a \$40 million company, and one of North Carolina's leading construction contractors

Written and produced by Lynn Haber & Sean Bakke

CT WILSON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY



ovation projects on commercial, industrial, institutional, and historic preservation structures. CT Wilson has completed two LEED certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) projects: the North and East Libraries in Durham, N.C. Only a handful of buildings in North Carolina have been LEED certified to date.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

At any given time, CT Wilson has approximately 15 construction projects underway. Approximately 60 percent of CT Wilson's work is in the public sector. And although the construction company is licensed to work in the neighboring state of Virginia, all of its business remains close to home in North Carolina.

According to company president Charles T. Wilson Jr., 60 percent of projects are hard

When Charles T. Wilson Sr. founded CT Wilson Construction Company in 1952 the firm's employees did it all — soup to nuts work, primarily for elementary schools in the eastern part of North Carolina.

Much has changed since Wilson Sr. bought out his share of Wrenn & Wilson, a construction company that focused primarily on utility and bridge work, to form CT Wilson.

Today, the \$40 million Durham-based business specializes in complicated ren-

COMPANY AT A GLANCE

CT Wilson Construction Company

Location: Durham, North Carolina.

CT Wilson specializes in complicated renovation projects on commercial, industrial, institutional and historic preservation structures.

Revenue averages
\$40 million annually.

At least 50 percent of the
company's supervisors in the field
have a college degree.

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bid lump sum projects, and most of these are on pre-qualified bid lists. The remaining 40 percent are negotiated work that the company acquires via its relationships in the community.

Chuck Wilson Jr. joined his father's company in the late 1960s after spending three years as a naval officer. He became company president in 1980.

THEN AND NOW

One of Wilson Sr.'s early contracts was refurbishing hangars and building a new office building when the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, N.C. was reactivated. The firm also did work at Camp Lejeune while completing the work at Seymour Johnson.

In the late 1950s, C.T. Wilson started major renovation work when Camp Butner was converted to the John Umstead Hospital for the N.C. Department of Mental Health.

In the 1970s, CT Wilson took on more work in the public schools arena followed by renovations of medical facilities and historical preservation work.

"When we first started doing renovation work very few other companies were doing it in this area. It allowed us to carve out a niche specializing in complicated jobs," says Wilson Jr.

The company's largest current project is a \$14 million three-year project at Person Memorial Hospital in Roxboro. The project involves the addition of 22,000 square feet of new construction to the first floor and renovation of 25,000 square feet of existing space. Some of the work to be done includes the addition of a surgical suite and a central energy plant.

At one point during the company's growth the payroll swelled to a staff of 250, but CT Wilson currently has approximately 100 employees. Noting that there was a time CT Wilson kept all work in-house, Chuck Wilson Jr. explains that a lot has changed in the building construction industry.





“Buildings are more complicated, with so many more types of materials: concrete, steel, masonry, plastics, lumber, as well as other specialty construction products,” he says.

“When we first started doing renovation work very few other companies were doing it in this area. It allowed us to carve out a niche specializing in complicated jobs.”

- Chuck Wilson Jr., president, CT Wilson

There's also been the emergence of specialty contractors. Rather than try to keep all of its employees full-time when it wasn't feasible to do so, CT Wilson changed its business strategy. The company trimmed its employee base and, instead, subcontracts to the growing number of specialty contractors as needed.

It's a business strategy that continues to work for the growing construction company.

“We make it a point to use outstanding people in both craft and management, and deliver the best quality product,” says Wilson Jr.

The company maintains approximately a quarter of a million dollars worth of equipment, including pick-up trucks and other work vehicles; renting larger pieces of equipment as needed.

Not one to shy away from change, Chuck Wilson welcomed the addition of a third generation Wilson — Charles T. Wilson III — to the business in 1995, who brought with him a new emphasis on information technology.

For a company of its size, CT Wilson is ahead of many of its competitors when it



comes to computerization, and that proves to be a major advantage for the company.

According to Wilson Jr., “The management of information is a critical part of any construction company in our industry at this time,” he says.

Company managers and superintendents in the field are all tuned into technology by utilizing laptops — and in some cases Blackberrys — for data, web and email access. Project managers keep online daily diaries, and all estimating, scheduling, project management, and accounting is done online.

Chuck Wilson says he’s seen the construction industry transform from a tough guy image to one that increasingly puts an emphasis on technology, education, and interpersonal skills.

Company philosophy at CT Wilson is to

encourage education and training. At least 50 percent of the company’s supervisors in the field have a college degree.

“All of our management personnel are required to take continuing education courses; all of our field employees are encouraged to complete an apprenticeship program and then proceed to take management courses. Many of our management personnel began their careers as laborers,” says Wilson Jr., who adds that the company invests in learning and tries to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to education.

Wilson Jr. was actively involved in the development of the Construction Manager at Risk policy for the greater University of North Carolina System when he was president of the Carolinas branch of the Associated General Contractors of America.

All three generations of Wilson's earned civil engineering degrees from North Carolina State University.

Chuck Wilson feels that one of the company's major challenges is finding good people. Once they are found, the company spends a great deal of resources in developing each employee to be the best that they can be.

"It used to be that we'd find the work first, then go out and find the people. Today we

get the people first and have no trouble getting the work," he says, adding that CT Wilson could have more work if it could find more qualified employees.

He acknowledges that construction is a difficult industry, and for people whose only interest is in making a living, there are easier ways to accomplish this goal.

"For those individuals who like to see things go up and come together, it's a very rewarding field," says Wilson Jr. ☺

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