

## Shawnee Construction celebrates 40 years

*(Editor's note: This story is being reprinted due to a layout error in the Dec. 16 issue.)*

By Allison Gaff  
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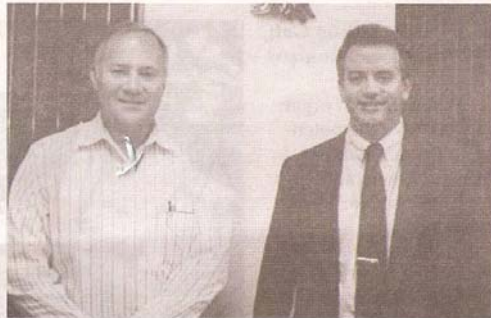
Shawnee Construction & Engineering is celebrating its 40th year, spanning five generations of the Schenkel family.

John A. Schenkel founded the business in 1968 at Home Avenue and South Wayne Avenue, focusing primarily on residential construction and insurance loss. Later, he moved the business to 1115 Broadway and then 220 E. Wallace. The present 17,000-square-foot location on Opportunity Drive in north Fort Wayne includes a shop, offices and warehouse.

Schenkel grew up in the construction business and learned the craft from his father and grandfather. His sons, Matt and John Schenkel Jr., grew up in Fort Wayne, graduated from Snider High School and today own the business.



Rick Waltmire, left, and Tim Smith work in the shop. Pictured at right are John Schenkel, Jr., left, and Matt Schenkel.



Photos by Allison Gaff

John Jr.'s son, Paul Schenkel, works part-time for the company.

The commercial construction side began in the early 1980s and eventually became the main focus.

John Schenkel, Jr., who earned an engineering degree from Purdue, and Matt, who earned a business degree from Notre Dame, oversee a staff of 42.

According to Matt Schenkel, the company has experienced a good growth pattern for the past 15 years, averaging 10 to 15 percent growth yearly.

"We try to always do what is right for the

client. We've been very fortunate that our labor force pretty much has the same philosophy. They really take care of the customer. That's helped us get a lot of repeat business," he said.

Shawnee Construction and Engineering provides commercial interior renovations, design and construction of new commercial buildings as well as building and leasing commercial property.

An important portion of the company's work is what Matt Schenkel calls service work, such as small remodeling jobs that provide opportunity to build a relationship

with the customer.

"By doing the small things, (customers) find out what kind of people we are and what kind of people we have in the field to do the work," he said.

"We've always felt that if you give people a good value for their money that they will keep coming back," he said.

This emphasis on long-term relationships means the company must give the absolute best service in the market available.

The company likes to be involved from the earliest stage, helping clients with site selection and

evaluating the soil on the proposed construction site.

While most of the company's clients are within a 60-mile radius of Fort Wayne, some recent projects have been in Bedford, Ind., and Columbus, Ohio.

"Most of our out of town work is with our existing clients. As they expand they take us with them," Matt Schenkel said.

Shawnee Construction & Engineering, 7701 Opportunity Dr., can be reached at 489-1234. For more information, visit [www.shawneeconstruction.com](http://www.shawneeconstruction.com).