

Erik Fagerland and Associates

How long have you been in the construction business?

"Over 25 years."

What motivated you pursuit it as a career?

"Grew up in a design-build family."

What would you consider your forte or specialty?

"Our forte is that we're led by a licensed architect. We have an architect in training who can prepare photo-realistic 3-D renderings. When people want to know what it's going to look like, we can say 'here it is.'"

What's been the biggest lesson you've learned through experience?

"Relentless bookkeeping is the only way to keep a business operating."

Is there any wisdom you've obtained that you wish you knew when you started?

"More confident salesmanship — unfortunately you have to 'sell' it even if someone wants it. By 'sell' I mean educate the customer."

What are the obstacles facing the industry?

"Constant rising cost and lower workforce."

How many employees do you have?

"There are six of us now. We had been up to 20 before the recession. Project manager Chris Woodby and I have been working together for 23 of the 25 years I've been in business."

How does your business today compare to 10 years ago?

"Evolved in the levels of product, we can show a customer before they commit to building it, mainly in 3-D modeling."

How did the recession impact your business?

"It impacted us in the beginning where we had less volume and more specialty work. There was a lot more remodeling."

Who are some of the local businesses you rely on?

"Our go-to guys are Ford Electric, Taft Plumbing, Active Enterprises and Lindstrom Construction."

What are the unique challenges or obstacles to building on the coast?

"Material delivery sources, workforce availability, competitive resources (lack of)."

Why do projects cost what they do?

"It costs more to build on the beach than it does in town. We have less workforce to choose from, fewer people that can work by

the piece, product has to get delivered from further away and our climate is more extreme. It simply costs more to build out here than the I-5 corridor construction."

You're currently building a concrete home in Seaview. How many concrete homes have you constructed?

"This is the second."

What are the advantages of building with concrete?

"It's indestructible. It's insect and rot resistant. It doesn't matter what you do to your house here, you're going to be dealing with water infiltration at some point. With insulated foam on both sides and concrete in the middle, there's nothing to rot. These are 50-year houses easy."

Is concrete home construction becoming more common?

"I think so. We know of another four or five on the Peninsula that have been done. They're pretty popular back east where the climate is less moderate. I think they're making their way out here because of the energy efficiency, durability and water/insect resistance. They're very common for basements back east

where it's colder. They're also popular with commercial projects like auto dealers and Napa stores. It's just a superior product."

Have there been any trends that have come and gone?

"I think the trend has been steady for the last 20 years — tall ceilings and hard surfaces. Everybody wants a wood floor or hard tile or granite countertops. We've been doing a lot of concrete floors for the last 16 years, all you have to do wax it."

What's the latest?

"Lately we've been playing around with PVC (polyvinyl) siding. AZEK sent us to Scranton, Pa. to view their manufacturing plant. We've used it on trim and done an entire of a home with a PVC siding — 100 percent recycled plastic."

What are the advantages of PVC siding?

"It's indestructible. It has a silica mixed in now and doesn't expand and contract like old vinyl siding used to. It has a built in drain plane so water and debris just runs down. It's impregnated with color and you don't have to paint it. All you have to do is pressure wash it. For years we were very anti-vinyl siding, but this is way better. It's vinyl siding on steroids."

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For the past 23 years, architect Erik Fagerland, on left, has worked alongside project manager Chris Woodby.

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