

# Real Estate Weekly

A Complete Guide to Vail Valley Real Estate • Week of Oct. 10 - Oct. 16, 1997

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George Shaeffer started his own construction company in 1979 with his tools, a pickup and the knowledge that he wanted to be his own boss. Nearly 19 years later, he has established a solid reputation in the community where he has built more than 70 custom homes and several commercial buildings. Photo by Andrew Holman.

## George Shaeffer built his business from the ground up

By SHERI COLE

Building on respect for others and quality construction, George Shaeffer found his forte in the Vail Valley in the custom-home market.

The George Shaeffer Construction Company's repertory comprises more than 70 homes in the area, many remodels, and several commercial buildings, including the WestStar Bank Building in Avon and the Pines Lodge in Beaver Creek. In addition to the homes, Shaeffer has built quite a reputation for himself and his company with many repeat customers and word of mouth as his main form of advertising.

"Our name precedes us," said Dennis Thompson, a project manager with Shaeffer Construction. "We don't do a lot of bidding. We're sought after and that kind of explains it. Our work is our best advertisement."

Shaeffer's role as the president of the company is to set the tone, provide leadership, and oversee the work his company is doing.

He first came to the area in 1973 just out of college at Western State in Gunnison, where he studied industrial arts education and business administration. He planned on becoming a shop teacher. Instead, here in the valley, he worked in the Gondola ski shop during the winter and did construction during the summers. He had worked construction in high school to put himself through college.

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them happy by offering benefits like profit sharing, a 401K plan, good health insurance, paid vacations and holidays, and a safety incentives program.

The safety incentives program was started as a way to reward employees for doing something right – making the workplace safer. Employees earn safety bucks by doing things like wearing their protective equipment on the job or reporting work hazards such as a frayed cord or a broken ladder. The safety bucks allow them to purchase things like apparel (from T-shirts to fleece vests), and gift certificates for City Market or the restaurant or store of their choice.

"Our subcontractors had a couple of accidents this spring," said Peggy Rucker, the operations coordinator for Shaeffer. "Both could have been easily prevented. We asked ourselves, 'How are we going to get our employees



Shaeffer Construction is currently adding a second floor, for office space, onto the headquarters in Eagle-Vail. Photo by Andrew Holman.

involved?" The only way to do it effectively is to offer incentives. With this program we're trying to increase safety awareness and get people to look out for each other. For example, if one employee notices another one

isn't wearing his safety goggles when he should be, that employee might go over and say something to him."

Shaeffer said the program is not only beneficial for the employees, but also for the

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George Shaeffer, owner and president of Shaeffer Construction, stands at the bottom left alongside his crew of employees.

## Shaeffer Construction: the people behind the business