

TRIANGLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Famed names in CRE win Champion Awards

Triangle Business Journal - by [Amanda Jones Hoyle](#)

Impact Award.

Smedes York.

Neither one title nor one job can sum up the career of Smedes York and his lifelong impact on the Triangle – not only in development but also for the community at large.

York was born into a family that was well established in the Raleigh community's elite. His mother's family had been in Raleigh since 1842, and his grandfather, C.V. York, built one of the largest construction companies in the region.

But York has established himself as a leader in his own right after more than 40 years of involvement in business and civic activities.

York took over his father's construction and real estate development companies in 1970 and diversified its holdings to include two commercial and residential brokerage firms, **York Properties** and Prudential York Simpson Underwood; a property management arm; a security company; a landscaping company; and his own real estate investment companies.

York Properties is celebrating its 100th year of business in 2010.

In 1977, York was elected to Raleigh's city council, and he served two terms as mayor. To follow up his political career, the national **Urban Land Institute** drafted him to serve as its chairman from 1989 through 1991. He also has served on the board of directors of the **North Carolina Chamber of Commerce** and the **Research Triangle Foundation**, and he is founding co-chair of the **Regional Transportation Alliance**.

York and his companies, which cumulatively employ about 600 people, helped bring new life to multiple commercial developments around the Triangle, including the Cameron Village shopping center, which his father built in 1959, and other retail centers around the Triangle.

York and his team also were instrumental in the development of the Hue condo and retail building that opened in 2009 in downtown Raleigh. York expects to break ground in 2010 on a retail project in downtown Raleigh called 111 Seaboard.

Resilience Award.

Greg Hatem and Empire Properties.

Empire Properties, the largest landlord of downtown Raleigh properties, used 2009 as a year to get

back to the basics.

The company turned its financial focus from growth and development of real estate properties and the redevelopment of historic buildings in downtown Raleigh to asset management and retention of Empire's 65 companies and 330 employees.

The company, which is led by founder and Managing Partner Greg Hatem, took the year to focus on filling vacant space in its downtown buildings, better management of its restaurants and properties, debt reduction and completing its open development projects while the market awaited the return of business activity and new construction lending.

Empire's sales team signed 84 leases in 2009 valued at \$8.15 million, including 24 lease renewals and 60 contracts for spaces that had either expired or where tenants vacated before the term ended. The property management team focused on enhancing the tenant experience, which led to increased referrals from existing tenants.

The company completed the redevelopment of the 230 Fayetteville Street building. North State Bank is expected to move into the ground-floor space in June. Law offices occupy the second and third floors, and the fourth floor is dedicated to residential space, including Hatem's home.

To help the company manage the bottom line, Empire President Andrew Stewart helped negotiate the restructuring of certain loans, culminating in more than \$2 million in debt reduction, including the renewal of six existing loans.

Sales at Empire's five restaurants also grew by 40 percent in aggregate in 2009 through better management of staff and inventory. The company even opened a new restaurant, Gravy, to fill space vacated by another restaurant in 2008.

Powerhouse Award.

E. Stephen Stroud.

Throughout his 45-year real estate career, **NAI Carolantic Realty** Chairman Steve Stroud has had a hand in many of the biggest real estate projects and transactions across North Carolina.

He hit the ground running in 1965, brokering such high-profile projects as Highwoods Office Park, the Crossroads Complex in Cary and the original assemblage of properties around the **Raleigh-Durham International Airport**. He founded the NAI Carolantic Realty real estate brokerage firm in 1972.

In 2009, Triangle Business Journal honored him with the award for the Top Land Sales Transaction of the Decade for his work assembling the 413 acres of land for the 5401 North project, which carried a total price tag of \$39 million.

Stroud followed that with the \$21 million sale of the Albemarle Plantation resort community in eastern North Carolina in July 2009. It was one of the largest transactions in North Carolina that year.

In addition to his real estate work, Stroud has been a leader in civic endeavors, serving as chairman of the **Centennial Authority**, which was charged with overseeing the planning and construction of the **RBC Center**. He's an avid supporter of **North Carolina State University** as a founding member

of the board of advisors for the university's **College of Management** and a past president of the university's athletic booster program, the **Wolfpack Club**.

Trendsetter Award.

William "Ric" Richards.

When the McDonald's restaurant on Kildaire Farm Road in Cary was reaching the end of its life span after 25 years, owner and operator William "Ric" Richards decided he wanted to rebuild the structure using the latest environmentally friendly materials and technology.

Even though the costs to build green were higher in the near-term, Richards said he wanted to set the stage for cost savings in the future in terms of reduced energy consumption while helping preserve valuable natural resources.

When the new McDonald's building opened in July 2009, it was the first of its kind in North Carolina and only the third of its kind in the U.S. It was awarded LEED Gold certification by the **U.S. Green Building Council**, the nationally accepted benchmark for the design and operation of green buildings.

The building incorporates LED lighting fixtures that are expected to last 30,000 hours compared to 1,300 hours for a standard incandescent light bulb. Solar tubes were installed to pipe in daylight for the dining room. Table and decor walls are made of renewable materials, including sunflower seed board, bamboo and recycled content. Highly efficient kitchen equipment and water-efficient restrooms will cut back on utility usage. Richards even installed plug-in charging stations in the parking lot for patrons with electric cars.

Economic Leadership Award .

Bill Kalkhof.

The economic development momentum in downtown Durham continues to grow under the leadership of the **Downtown Durham Inc.** and its president, Bill Kalkhof.

Since 1994, when Kalkhof helped start the advocacy group for private development in downtown Durham, more than \$1.2 billion worth of investment has been made in properties in Durham's central business district.

Kalkhof was on the committee to get the Durham Bulls Athletic Park built in 1993. He has been an advocate for developers involved with the **American Tobacco Campus**, the **Durham Performing Arts Center**, West Village, **Venable Center**, Golden Belt, Durham Central Park, renovation of the Historic Durham Athletic Park, the downtown **YMCA**, City Place, Peabody Place, the Imperial Building and more.

Kalkhof also has been involved in the recruitment of many of downtown Durham's largest corporate tenants, including the headquarters of Burt's Bees, the McKinney advertising agency, the Smith Breeden investment firm and the James Scott Farrin law firm.

In the past 10 years, downtown Durham's employee base has grown from 3,000 workers, to 14,000 workers; residential units from 10, to almost 1,000; and the number of visitors each year from fewer than 1 million, to more than 2.3 million.

H Professional Commercial Real Estate Service H

Robin Roseberry Anders

When an arsonist burned down gaming developer Virtual Heroes' office in Cary in 2007, Raleigh real estate professional Robin Roseberry Anders was among one of the first people Virtual Heroes CEO Jerry Heneghan turned to for help.

"I had to quickly find a new location for almost 40 computer game developers despite overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable challenges," Heneghan wrote in a recommendation letter for Anders. "Robin stepped in and got us squared away in record time. She was a blinding light of hope, comfort and resourcefulness in our hour of despair."

Anders is one of the senior leasing professionals at NAI Carolantic Realty, a commercial real estate brokerage firm in Raleigh that she joined in late 2007. Prior to that, she spent 10 years as a senior leasing representative with **Highwoods Properties Inc.**, where she was responsible for an office leasing portfolio that exceeded 1.7 million square feet.

Anders is a member of TCAR, TRAOPA, TCREW, the Raleigh Professional Women's Forum and the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee. She also is a member of a select group of brokers across the country who have achieved the **Society of Industrial & Office Realtors** designation as an office specialist and one of only a few women members.

Best Land Use Solution.

East 54.

The East 54 development project in Chapel Hill was designed to incorporate as much density as possible on the 9-acre tract on N.C. 54 at the "Gateway to Chapel Hill."

Three design goals dictated the plan, including:

n a mix of uses and density, including 427,000 square feet of hotel, office, residential and retail space;

n an economically diverse population base, including the incorporation of affordable housing condo units making up 30 percent of all condo units at the site, and;

n a commitment to sustainable design, including becoming one of the first communities in the country to achieve LEED gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council's Neighborhood Development Pilot Program.

To accommodate the desired density, the development team built all stormwater treatment in underground basins, which collect water for irrigation and free up space for pedestrians.

Another challenge was the necessary relocation of an existing Orange Water and Sewer Authority sewer easement that trisected the site. The sewer line was lowered, and the developer negotiated a revised easement agreement.

Traffic challenges were solved with most parking located in decks beneath the commercial space and bike paths connecting to the town's greenway system. Pedestrian crossings, roadway widening and new stoplights were used for traffic-calming efforts.

The East 54 buildings opened in late 2009.

The development team included development manager **East West Partners of Chapel Hill**, architect firm **Dishner Moore Architects of Winston-Salem**, construction firm Resolute of Chapel Hill, commercial real estate firm **Tri Properties** of Durham, retail real estate firm **Hunter & Associates of Raleigh** and engineering firm John R. McAdams of Durham.

Best Development Project.

Quintiles Plaza.

Described as a “lantern of glass,” the 12-story Quintiles Plaza office building along Interstate 40 at Page Road in Durham is also a testament to **Quintiles Transnational’s** commitment to growing and expanding its corporate headquarters in the Triangle.

The Quintiles Plaza building opened in early 2009 as the new home to the company’s global headquarters and some 2,000 employees of one of the world’s largest clinical research organizations.

The building was developed by Tri Properties of Durham and was designed to incorporate an adjoining upscale hotel in the future.

Quintiles Plaza sits on a seven-acre pad on the edge of the **Imperial Center** business park in Durham and has been dubbed the “crown jewel” of the 4.5 million-square-foot business park due to its size, economic impact, location and design.

The building incorporates a 997-space parking deck built into an existing ravine to reduce its visibility, so the visual focus is on the glass and metal building with pedestrian plazas and a reflecting pool.

Best Redevelopment Project.

Wakelon School.

The neoclassical Italianate-style Wakelon School building has been a part of Zebulon’s history since it opened to faculty and students in 1909.

It was only fitting that the town’s government leaders would one day operate from its halls.

The town hired the Raleigh architecture firm Clearscapes to create a long-term master plan for the town’s office space needs and develop cost estimates to help elected officials evaluate the appropriateness of issuing bonds.

In March 2007, Zebulon voters approved a plan to purchase the historic building from **GlaxoSmithKline**, which had been using it since 1986 for office space and a training facility.

Renovations to the building began in early 2008. Zebulon consolidated most of its town administration offices and police department headquarters into the building, now renamed the Zebulon Municipal Complex, in 2009.

Notable design features for the building, which was added to the **National Registry** of Historic Places in 1976, include exposure of the original brick and large wooden morise and tenon joint

trusses in the **Council Chambers**. The site also incorporates a courtyard paved with commemorative bricks and a decorative fountain.

Community Enhancement Award.

Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law.

Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law made big waves in downtown Raleigh when the college announced in 2008 that it would be moving its law students, faculty and staff to downtown Raleigh to be closer to the state's wheels of justice.

Prior to Campbell's arrival, Raleigh was one of the largest state capitals in the country without a law school.

Campbell University assumed ownership of the office building at 225 Hillsborough St. in February 2008 and began renovation of the building in November 2008. Within nine months, the renovations were complete and classes were in session.

The law school building has 13 state-of-the art classrooms, three courtrooms, a 25,000-square-foot library and a 177-seat auditorium. One of the three courtrooms is dedicated to the **North Carolina Business Court-Raleigh** Division, making Campbell Law one of just a few law schools in the nation to house a working court.

The school is within walking distance of the **North Carolina General Assembly**, the state Supreme Court, the state **Court of Appeals** and Wake County District and Superior courts. More than 125 large and small law firms practice within a five-block radius of the school.

About 410 students and more than 50 faculty and staff made the move from Campbell University's main campus in Buies Creek.

Most Creative Local Marketing Campaign.

BJAC.

Raleigh architecture firm BJAC launched a postcard direct mail campaign in 2009, but it had a different spin than the industry norm.

Instead of showcasing photographs and drawings of the firm's portfolio of projects as is typical in the architecture and engineering industry, BJAC's marketing group designed 15 postcards that specifically reference the firm's ability to solve client problems.

For example, one postcard depicts a puzzle with one piece missing with the message, "BJAC – Finding solutions to complex problems." Another design illustrates a school of goldfish moving in one direction with one fish wearing the BJAC logo swimming in the opposite direction. The message: "BJAC – Architectural practice beyond the norm."

Any member of BJAC's staff can order the postcards through the firm's intranet, and the cards are printed in-house. The marketing department delivers the postcard to the staff member's desk so that she or he can hand-write a personalized message. The message is recorded in a database to ensure that no client will ever receive the same message or postcard twice.

Triangle CREW Networking Award.

HH Architecture.

The Triangle CREW Networking Award honors a team of Triangle CREW members who worked together to resolve a real estate need or problem.

In 2009, the Raleigh architecture firm HH Architecture, which is led by CREW member Kristen Hess, needed to expand its office space.

Hess had been introduced to commercial real estate broker Michelle Rich Goode of **Rich Commercial Realty** at a TCREW meeting by fellow CREW member Laura Hulse of **RBC Bank**.

Hess hired Goode to help her company locate a 4,160-square-foot building for the company's offices.

CREW member Katherine Thomas of **Progress Energy** helped Goode collect information about an energy substation site that was adjacent to a building that Hess' firm was planning to purchase.

CREW member Chris Young with **First Citizens Bank** helped put in place the **Small Business Association** loan for Hess' purchase of a building at 520 S. Harrington St. in Raleigh.

The \$280,000 acquisition was finalized in November 2009.

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