

# Colorado Construction

**Gold Hard Hat Awards**  
The Best Colorado Projects of 2009



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# Gold Hard Hat Awards



[www.colorado.construction.com](http://www.colorado.construction.com)

## Criteria for Project Entries

The annual Gold Hard Hat Awards is a competition to determine the best projects completed by firms in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota. Firms involved in any aspect of a project may submit it for consideration. There is no charge for entries.

Judging was done by a panel of industry experts based on design quality and innovation, craftsmanship, the project's contribution to the community and the industry, solution of unique design and construction challenges and overall excellence. The size of the project was not a factor in the judging.

## Eligibility and Judging

- Project sites must be located in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota or South Dakota.
- Projects must be completed or at least 90% complete between Sept. 1, 2008 and Aug. 31, 2009.
- Firms were allowed to nominate one project per category, and each project could be entered in only one category.

- Entries could be submitted by any of the firms working on a project, including owners, architects, engineers, contractors and subs.
- To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, judges abstained from voting in categories that included projects in which they or their firms were involved.
- Judges were allowed to award ties in categories where projects were of equal merit, and they were not required to award any or all of the winning levels (gold, silver or bronze) if they determined that a project did not merit those awards.

This is the first year we have expanded the program outside Colorado. The decision to extend our coverage into neighboring states allows projects outside Colorado to compete in the National Best of awards, which appear annually in *Engineering News-Record*. This year, 24 projects from *Colorado Construction* will be entered in the National Best of 2009 awards competition.

For information on the 2010 Gold Hard Hat Awards or the National Best of Awards program, call 303-584-6724.





## 2009 LEGACY AWARD

### The Mentor

Ed Wambsganss founded companies  
and created industry leaders

By Mark Shaw

Retired contractor Ed Wambsganss sees life parallels where others might not—like the motivation he got from helping his mother wash chicken eggs on the family farm in Kansas when he was a boy, because “we got two cents more per egg if they were clean when she took them to the hatchery,” he says.

The same motivation drove him into his first construction job out of college, building Titan 2 missile silos for the federal government during the Cold War. “I had a wife, two kids and we lived in a trailer house. That was plenty of motivation to do well on those silos. Like washing eggs, they were both delicate operations,” Wambsganss says.

His ability to see connections and to motivate himself and others to do their best work is what made Wambsganss, 70, a successful contractor, manager and industry leader who started two well-known local construction firms.

Because of those achievements and his lifelong mentoring of young construction professionals, Wambsganss is being honored with *Colorado Construction* magazine’s first Legacy Award, given to individuals who have had a significant impact on the local industry in a lifetime of work.

**“The elegancy of WECI and WSCI still exists in the people who worked there and who have given so much to the industry.” — Ed Wambsganss**

Wambsganss spent his entire 46-year career in the construction industry. He learned the contracting trade building missile silos and power plants in the ‘60s,



then in 1973, he started his own company, Western Empire Constructors Inc. The general building firm landed some impressive jobs, including all of the concrete work for the Johns Manville campus, working as a sub to Turner Construction.

WECI grew quickly, building high-rises downtown, earning more than \$100 million in annual revenue and catching the eye of colleagues and competitors alike. Seeing an opportunity, Wambsganss sold WECI to a Houston firm in 1982.

He wanted to move into more heavy and industrial projects, so the following year, he founded Western Summit Constructors Inc. and oversaw the expansion of the

company into multiple locations. WSCI builds water and wastewater treatment plants in nearly every corner of the U.S.

Meanwhile, Wambsganss himself got more involved in the local industry, becoming president of AGC Colorado in 1984. “It was a great chance to give back to the industry,” he says.

Through the early ‘90s, WSCI joint ventured with TIC-The Industrial Co. on several major projects, then the two companies merged in 1993, but kept their own names. “It was a good match,” he says. “We shared the same values, principles and the way we treated people.”

Wambsganss officially retired from TIC in December 2008, after managing hundreds of projects and people. “The projects are important, because that’s how you earn a living, but the people you work with are more important,” Wambsganss says. “The best reward is watching people’s careers advance and helping them become the best they can be.”

He has mentored many of the local industry’s top construction managers and helped to create some of Colorado’s most robust young contracting firms, like Glacier Construction, started and managed by his son Randy. “But,” Wambsganss says, “it’s really about doing things right, living life with integrity. You give people opportunities to show what they can do. That’s the way it’s supposed to work.”

Wambsganss and Eunice, his wife of nearly 50 years, continue to live in Denver near their children, with frequent visits to his esteemed alma mater, Kansas State University, where the couple provides financial support for students in engineering and construction. <<



GOLD

## Outstanding Civil/Public Works Project

## City of Alamosa Water Treatment Plant

Submitted by Richard P. Arber Associates



The City of Alamosa Water Treatment Plant is a 5-million-gal.-per-day facility for removal of arsenic from the city's well water. The project encompassed the Water Treatment Plant, yard piping and im-

provements at eight remote sites, including well houses and storage tanks.

The new WTP brings the city of Alamosa into compliance with the EPA's new standards for arsenic adopted in 2001. <<

## Alamosa

\$10.3 million

Owner City of Alamosa

Contractor Moltz Construction Inc.

Design Firm Richard P. Arber Associates

Start March 2007

Finish Nov. 2008



SILVER

## Outstanding Civil/Public Works Project

RidgeGate West Village  
Stormwater Quality System

Submitted by Merrick &amp; Co.

RidgeGate is a new 3,500-acre, sustainable mixed-use development being designed with a New Urbanism theme. The 21st Century stormwater quality system includes detention ponds, outfall pipes, channels and water-quality facilities to detain, convey and treat stormwater flows from single-family and multifamily residential, office parks, retail development, a hospital, recreational facilities and large open spaces. <<



## Lone Tree

\$500,000, First Phase only

Owner RidgeGate Investments, Coventry Development Corp.

Contractor Urban Farmer

Design Firm Merrick &amp; Co.

Start July 2008

Finish Aug. 2009

BRONZE

## Outstanding Civil/Public Works Project

## Ranchman's Ditch Flood Control Project – Phase 1

Submitted by Scott Contracting Inc.

The first phase of the Ranchman's Ditch Flood Control Project installed 7,100 ft of triple 78-in. reinforced concrete pipe and several retention basins to remove significant areas of Grand Junction from the 100-year flood plain.

The project team faced wet conditions and unstable soil throughout but managed to overcome conditions with innovative technologies such as geotextile materials that brought structural integrity to the soil and prevented movement of support soils. <<



## Grand Junction

\$6.9 million

Owner City of Grand Junction

Contractor Scott Contracting Inc.

Design Firm City of Grand Junction

Start March 2007

Finish Sept. 2008



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**GOLD HARD HAT AWARD**

**CIVIL/PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT**

**City of Alamosa Water Treatment Plant**

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