

Sub-Floor Solutions

savvy
CB
subcontractor profile



***Concrete
Promise***



Sub-Floor Solutions

Whether it's preparing for a new installation or remediating a problem floor, this company's expert solutions are as solid as concrete!

By Chelsie Butler

In any commercial construction project, the flooring – be it tile, vinyl, epoxy, carpeting, wood or other material – is often one of the first thing people notice. What goes under the floors, however, can be even more important, as it is the support structure for everything above it. Though oftentimes overlooked, it is imperative that precautionary steps be taken to ensure a proper subfloor system in order to avoid such issues as moisture emission, as this can cause a flooring system to fail.

Dwayne Lewis, president of Sub-Floor Solutions, an innovative concrete preparation, restoration and moisture emission control company, has been working with floor covering application issues for more than 26 years. From healthcare facilities and schools to office buildings and retail stores, Lewis has become an expert at designing and installing the correct systems to ensure that a building's floors, while low on the horizon, are at the height of perfection. "Managing the interface between concrete and floor covering," is their stated mission, and the company

has developed an unsurpassed expertise of concrete slabs and how certain flooring products conjoin with them.

From a start-up company that opened its first location in Charlotte in 1999, Sub-Floor Solutions expanded to Atlanta in 2007 with aggressive plans to open additional locations in prime markets such as Orlando, Dallas, Phoenix, Baltimore and eventually, across the entire country. Catering to clients all over the Southeast, its reputation has even reached Puerto Rico, where Sub-Floor Solutions was called upon for a flooring project at the DuPont Pharmaceutical plant.

In addition to their expertise in preparing new subfloor installations, the company is often called upon by general contractors and building owners to resolve existing floor problems. One of the biggest of these, Cousins Properties, recently retained Sub-Floor Solutions for the rescue of a failed cork floor installation due to floor slab moisture at the Emory Conference Center. The contractor was in search of an epoxy-based moisture



In applications such as healthcare, manufacturing, and education, among others, moisture mitigation is an essential process in prolonging the life cycle of a floor system, saving costly down-time and replacement. Here, a Sub-Floor Solution technician applies a state-of-the-art solution that is guaranteed to act as a moisture barrier for at least 10 years.

remediation system which, in addition, required a cementitious underlayment. Sub-Floor Solutions was well-qualified to install the entire system.

“While many installers believe they are qualified to provide a floor slab remediation system, our project demanded proven experience,” explained Lou Conti, vice president of development for Cousins. “For our situation, we needed a single-source installer who could provide an extended warranty on a great product, and Sub-Floor Solutions was the perfect fit.”

Unfortunately, not all contractors, developers and owners know the value in developing and choosing the correct floor system. In many projects, if it means additional cost, critical items such as these may not be given the priority they deserve. But as is almost always the case in construction, you get what you pay for. Sub-Floor Solutions’ goal is to pursue opportunities with companies who share their same belief – flooring is a capital investment and not only an aesthetic finish.

Healthcare and higher-education institutions, according to Lewis, are, critical-path markets that are looking for long-term flooring solutions and are willing to make the extra investment. For instance, if an



“Installing a light-weight solution over a deflected elevated slab serves two important functions,” explains Lewis. “First, it won’t overload the slab, so that the floor won’t sag in the future, and it will correct any level issues prior to installing the floor covering.”

Earlier this year, Bell Flooring Sciences Group, a forensic consulting firm specializing in flooring systems and concrete slabs, was brought in by general contractor Skanska to do the preliminary testing of the slab to see what, if any, issues there were. Based on the findings, Sub-Floor Solutions was retained to install an epoxy-based moisture and alkalinity remediation system, which is essentially a barrier between the concrete and the floor covering which protects the flooring against those elements.

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operating room has to be shut down due to a failed floor, not only is patient care compromised, the hospital could lose significant revenue, simply because the flooring process was not managed properly on the front end.

“It is widely accepted that the overall cost to repair a failed floor in a healthcare facility averages 5.5 times the original installation price, and it’s just not worth the risk,” says Lewis. “Facility managers, owners and builders are beginning to change the way they look at cost and value, and we are educating them on their options and the pros and cons involved with each.”

Shands Hospital in Gainesville, FL, is opening a new 500,000-square-foot cancer facility that is connected to the original hospital by a pedestrian and staff tunnel.

“This entire flooring process involves several steps, including shot-blasting the concrete, installing the epoxy-based moisture remediation system, then a layer of cement-based underlayment and finally the actual flooring,” explains Walter Bell, principal of Bell Flooring Sciences Group. “If a floor fails due to excessive moisture, added steps are required in addition to addressing infection control issues. This changes what was an additional step in the original project into a catastrophic repair with the extended downtime and loss of revenue of many areas of a healthcare facility.”

In fact, *how* repairs are facilitated is often a big issue, as it can disrupt the ongoing operations of any facility’s business. Here, too, is another area where this company



Sub-Floor Solutions offers a wide variety of products and services suitable for various applications, including polished concrete, stamped overlays, epoxy floor coatings, and, as seen here, heated floor systems, often used in high-end residential buildings.

excels. Sub-Floor Solutions specializes in dustless repair methods, make it unnecessary to close down the entire facility during remediation.

An Educated Client

Sub-Floor Solutions strives to educate their customers on the best way to handle flooring issues *before* they occur. By being aware of the major changes that have taken place in the construction and flooring industry in the last 10 - 15 years, they are able to give their clients the most up-to-date information on available products and techniques, including the most “green” solutions available.

“We want to educate our customers on the risk, the warranty, the track record and the value of each system and product,” said Lewis. “Sometimes the decision is purely cost driven, but we have found that an informed customer will usually make the choice to do the right thing for the long term and not take short cuts on quality.”

Concrete repair, resurfacing and moisture mitigation services, while a major part of their business, are not the only services offered by Sub-Floor Solutions. Their expansive selection also includes contemporary flooring options, such as polished concrete (which has the bonus of having earned the LEED-friendly designation); epoxy coatings for floor and wall surfaces; and stained and stamped concrete finishes. Polished concrete is a new trend in architectural finishes and is extremely easy to maintain and features “slip resistance” above the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) minimum

requirements. When asked about upcoming projects, Lewis was very positive, especially in the Atlanta area. This challenging economy is definitely not affecting this company’s ability to grow, as Sub-Floor Solutions has increased its pipeline of work by an astounding 250 percent over this same time last year.

“I am confident my team and I will continue to grow our company into a national entity with strategic locations around the country,” states Lewis. “The need for a quality, reputable, stable company that manages the scope of work in which we excel is strong, and it is my goal to fulfill that need.”

Chelsie Butler is a freelance writer and editor in Atlanta. She has had more than 15 years of experience writing for a variety of publications on a multitude of topics. Most recently, she was the editor for Hospitality Construction magazine.



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