



# CASE STUDY



**Rogers Construction** – Founded in 1961, Atlanta, Georgia-based Rogers Construction Company provides commercial construction, general contracting and construction management services to both private and public clients throughout the Southeast.

Rogers has completed over 360 projects for a wide range of uses, including nursing home construction and renovation, and in 2008 earned the ACGA (Associated General Contractors of Georgia) Build Georgia Award for its outstanding work in the renovation of the Ashton Woods Rehabilitation Center in Atlanta.



**Unger Electric’s Challenges:** (specific to nursing home renovation)

- Work Environment: Fully Functioning, Fully Occupied Nursing Home
- Resident Safety
- Building Rapport with Facility Administration/Staff
- Shifting Schedules

Most construction sites are controlled chaos. Scattered tools, materials and debris combine to form a cluttered, loud and potentially dangerous work environment. The renovation of a fully occupied and functioning nursing home, on the other hand, is anything but typical. In fact, it’s about as far as one can get from business-as-usual on the job site.

On a nursing home project, Rogers Construction and its subs, like Unger Electric, not only grapple with the typical challenges of completing a job on time and on budget, they face a special set of challenges relating to the project’s impact on residents and their families, and on the facility’s staff and administrators.

“Basically, we’re turning an aging building into what looks like an up-market hotel and we’re doing it in a nursing home facility with 150 patients who need constant attention,” says Derek Hearn, Rogers Construction’s Vice President of Operations, who stresses the critical importance of safety awareness in such a setting. “You might be working around Alzheimer’s patients, so you can’t leave tools, materials even for a couple of seconds, it could be a nightmare.”

Jeff Unger, Unger Electric’s Owner and President, sees safety as a central responsibility, particularly in nursing homes, and considers it to be part of a larger communication challenge. “You have to be people oriented to be able to do this. It’s not like coming into an empty building where you throw your stuff around and have free reign. You have to build a rapport with the nurses, patients and administrators and build trust.”

In an effort to minimize any impact on patient care and lifestyle, comprehensive renovations must be made in multiple phases and schedules must be fluid, requiring extreme flexibility on the part of Unger Electric and other subcontractors.

“We’re ripping out bathrooms and replacing them, putting in new tile, new HVAC, flooring fixtures – everything - and Unger Electric is rewiring the entire facility,” says Hearn.

“The administrators usually tell us how many rooms we can have access to at a given time, and which ones. But everybody needs to be totally flexible, because those plans can change day-to-day, depending on a number of outside factors, like state inspections or a patient that’s too ill to move.”

Unger understands the importance of job-site flexibility and has developed a business model that makes it a top priority. “We’re able to move our resources and schedule around to make sure things happen when they need to happen,” he says. “If it’s necessary, we’ll back off and wait until we’re called in. We realize this is specialized work, so you have to have a good attitude going in.”

Unger Electric has been Rogers’ electrical contractor on nursing home renovation projects in Georgia and South Carolina, and Unger points out that his company’s flexibility extends to out-of-state projects as well. “I talk to my job superintendent and Rogers’ superintendent every day to make sure we’re on the same page, and as the week progresses I’ll find out what we need to do for the following week or if we need to stay over the weekend. You have to deal with the realities and be able to work around a schedule, whether that means working at night or leaving and coming back the next week. We’re set up for it. We know exactly what it takes.”

One renovation project in which Unger Electric served as electrical contractor - Ashton Woods Nursing Home in Atlanta - earned Rogers the 2008 ACGA (Associated General Contractors of Georgia) Build Georgia Award. According to Hearn, that project presented a particularly critical electrical challenge.

“We reached a point where we had to swap over the permanent power from the old service to the new,” he recalls. “Imagine a nursing home without power. It had the potential to be a nightmare.”

Unger Electric’s Unger, however, engineered a way to swap the facility’s 1500 amp service while it remained in use by building the new service behind the old and systematically moving the power over in stages. The longest Ashton Woods was without power was 15 minutes.

“Unger Electric does a fantastic job,” says Hearn. “They are the epitome of a team player. They not only deliver good quality work, they’re flexible and responsive with a can-do attitude.”