

## 24-Year-Old Superintendent Shines at Rogers Construction Company

When strangers walk onto the Rogers Construction Company jobsite in Jefferson, GA, and ask to see the superintendent, they're in for a surprise. Superintendents are grizzled veterans of many construction projects with gray hair and lots of battle scars, right?

Not this one. He's 24 year-old Nick Mercer. He really only looks about 19. Maybe.



Nick Mercer checks the dimensions of an elevator pit atop the Jackson Electric Membership Cooperative building under construction in Jefferson, GA. Mercer spent six years in intensive training with Rogers Construction on his way to becoming a project superintendent. "I learned to read a blueprint so thoroughly that I could lay out every floor of a building," Mercer recalled. "I wanted to make sure it was being done exactly right. That's what is expected at Rogers Construction: everything done right, on time and to the highest standards of the construction industry." Rogers won the "Build Georgia Award" for the quality and timeliness of their work on Glenn Jones Middle School, built under the direction of Superintendent Ricky Vickery and Assistant Superintendent Nick Mercer.

"Yeah, a lot of people don't believe me when they ask for the 'Super'," Mercer said chuckling. "Some folks even like to make me prove myself before they take me seriously. But that never takes long."

It surely doesn't when you are as knowledgeable about your project as Mercer is. "This is one of the most complicated projects we've ever done at Rogers Construction," Mercer said as he pointed out the features of the rising Jackson EMC building. "This building is going to be the nerve center of the EMC when it is completed. It will have to withstand tornadoes, floods, even a terrorist attack, if necessary. The facility will have to stay in operation regardless of the situation because it will allow Jackson EMC to keep the power flowing."

Mercer went on to explain that the building uses pan-formed concrete floors with post-tensioned cables to make it virtually invulnerable to any kind of disaster. Mercer knows how much tension is put on the cables, the strength the cables add to the floors, the systems required to keep the facility functioning, and everything else about the project. After very few minutes listening to him speak about all the complex aspects of the job, you can quickly see why it doesn't take people long to realize that this man is THE Super. No more questions, no more tests.

Mercer's six-year path to superintendent was no cake walk. "That was six years of the most intensive training you can imagine," Mercer recalled. "After I was out of school, I was in the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA) carpentry program and worked in carpentry for two years. Then I became an assistant super to my mentor, Rick Vickery of Rogers Construction. He taught me all about day-to-day running of a project. I was promoted to Superintendent after six years in construction. I still learn more and more every day. And I expect to continue to learn from now on."



Rick Vickery (right) and Nick Mercer discuss details of the Jackson EMC project (background). Vickery trained Mercer to be a project superintendent for Rogers Construction. “Nick studies a project so thoroughly that he can describe every part of it to you,” Vickery pointed out. “He is able to work with people of all types on the job because he arms himself with all the details needed to run the job. He plans out the work better than most people can. So, when Nick speaks, people pay attention. Yet, he knows when it is time to listen to the other person, too. That’s a valuable skill.”

Rick Vickery, Project Manager, knew he had a fast learner when he taught carpentry to Nick Mercer five and a half years ago. “I could see that Nick could learn anything he wanted to know,” Vickery said. “But that’s not what made me think that Nick was destined to rise quickly through the various positions of laborer, helper, and assistant super. It was the way he works with people that convinced me. I’d send him out to straighten out things with people on the job. Imagine an 18 year-old going up to a 280 pound bodybuilder to tell him to put his hard hat on. Nick handled things like that easily. He knows how to talk to people, and when to listen.”



Nick Mercer (left) answers a question for curb and gutter man, Andres Salazar (center), while assistant superintendent Michael Glenn (right) looks on. “If there’s a question, Nick is the man to see,” said Salazar. “He either knows or can find out anything about the job, even one as complex as this. I asked him where the handicap ramp was going to be located and he told me, but it didn’t sound right to me so I asked him to show me on the drawing. He showed me. He was exactly right!”

Mercer’s dad, Roy Mercer, is also a superintendent with Rogers. “When Nick hired on I told him that all the learning and education in the world is useless unless you know how to treat people,” the senior Mercer recalled. “From our owner, Roger Huggins, on down to our laborers, everyone at Rogers Construction is expected to treat people with respect, honesty and fairness. We treat all people the same. That’s how we do business.”

That must be the case. Roy Mercer is proud to say that he has been treating people well for 20 years as a Rogers employee. You can hear his pride of his company in his voice. The younger Mercer speaks and acts the same way.

Nick Mercer loves the challenge of being a project superintendent. He also is mighty happy to be with Rogers Construction. “This company has people that know how to run

a business. Our customers keep coming back to us,” Mercer said. “People retire from this company. That’s sort of unusual in the construction industry. But here at Rogers, you have the chance to prove yourself and be recognized for your accomplishments. That’s why people stay.”

Being recognized as one of the youngest project superintendents certainly has been a reward for Mercer. But the larger reward is, at age 24, being recognized as one of the best. That’s what working hard, working smart and learning how to work with all kinds of people will get you. That’s Nick Mercer.

*CEFGA – the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia – is a nonprofit organization supported by leading construction companies and trade associations, working to promote careers in the construction industry. For more information contact John Beavin at 678-889-4445 or visit [www.cefga.org](http://www.cefga.org)*