

# Slabjackers: Raising the island's patios

Story and photography by  
**Nathan Whalen**

On a recent Thursday morning, workers from Superior Slabjacking, Inc. spent the day at a home overlooking Dugualla Bay on northern Whidbey Island fixing a concrete patio that was starting to sink.

Instead of replacing the concrete, the two-man team drilled a couple of holes and pumped in a slurry of non-organic top soil, builders sand and cement.

That material helped raise the patio 6 inches — back to its original height. That also helped raise a second-story patio that was sagging.

"We're trying to re-establish (the patios) foundation," said Scott Schwehm who works for Superior Slabjackers.

They had to drill several holes in the deck to ensure the slurry was distributed evenly underneath.

The four-person company has been going to various houses on Whidbey Island to fill in voids that form underneath patios and walkways. Patrick Hayes, vice president of sales and marketing, said Superior Slabjacking typically raises garage floors, patios, pool decks and walkways.

Patios can sink or crack within the first three years of construction if the ground beneath isn't properly compacted. Hayes said the placement of steel re-bar in concrete can be a factor in sinking.

The company's employees have also found themselves repairing damage caused by earthquakes. Hayes said that slabjacking is cheaper and faster than tearing out a sunken patio.

Back at the worksite, Superior Slabjacking employees have finished rais-



Ryan Earl of Superior Slabjacking pumps material underneath a concrete deck that needed to be raised approximately 6 inches.

ing the concrete deck at the home by the end of the day. Then, they filled the holes in the patio. About 20 minutes later, it could be used again.

Hayes said if a new patio was poured at the house, it would take 28 days to properly set. This, he said, will save homeowners approximately 60 percent over replacing the patio.

"People are so happy when we do this," Hayes said.

He said typical jobs range in cost from \$300 to \$2,000 depending on the extent of the damage and how big the void is underneath concrete. That indicates how much material is needed and how much time it will take to fill it. In the past, Hayes has seen spaces large enough that raccoons can move in.

Hayes said Superior Slabjackers are willing to take the cheaper jobs to get

their names out into the community. That name recognition is needed, considering they opened for business in April.

The Camano Island-based company is focusing its work in Skagit, Island and Whatcom counties.

For more information about Superior Slabjacking, call 888-887-2473 or visit the company's Web site at [www.superiorslabjacking.com](http://www.superiorslabjacking.com).

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