

# Superior Slabjacking gives concrete a lift

By Kimberly Hilden  
SCBJ Assistant Editor

Sunken patios, tilted walkways, uneven basement floors — they are daily nuisances for some homeowners but the bread and butter for one company in the business of giving concrete a lift.

Superior Slabjacking Inc., which has been operating in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties since its founding in early 2004, has moved into Snohomish County, targeting the residential market for its services, said company President Shannon Schwehm.

## Superior Slabjacking Inc.

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"It's always been here, the need for it," Schwehm said of concrete lifting, the process of raising a concrete slab by first drilling holes into it and then strategically injecting it with a dense slurry.

In regions such as the Midwest, where freezing and thawing often lead to sunken sidewalks and roadways, the practice of concrete lifting, or "slabjacking," is a common one, she said. "Here, there's a need for it because of soil erosion, the rain. If the soil is not compacted down hard enough when a slab is poured, there will be movement."

While Schwehm handles the administrative side, the concrete lifting is performed by Schwehm's husband, Scott, and business partner Ryan Earl, who together have years of experience in slabjacking, she said.

Since its inception, Superior Slabjacking has been building its clientele one household and one contractor at a time, with the occasional commercial or public project thrown into the mix, including



Photos courtesy of Superior Slabjacking Inc.  
"It is fascinating watching sunken concrete come up," said Patrick Hayes, vice president of sales and marketing for Superior Slabjacking Inc., which recently repaired this residential walkway, lifting the fallen concrete (at top) to make it level (above).

work for ConocoPhillips and the Bellingham Parks Department, Schwehm said.

"Residential is the main target, but we've talked with cities and counties about doing work for them," she said,

noting that the company has done work in Snohomish County for Seattle Pacific Homes.

The advantage of concrete lifting vs. concrete replacement is savings in

time and money for the consumer, said Patrick Hayes, the company's vice president of sales and marketing.

Although every job is unique, most take between two and eight hours to complete, with clients feeling little to no disruption, he said.

"With our process, we're actually able to use the patio usually within a half an hour of when we're done, and we are environmentally safe," Hayes said. "We're not going to do any damage to any shrubs or bushes. We don't have to worry about the landfill disposing of other material."


The slurry Superior Slabjacking uses is a mix of builders' sand, Portland cement and other inorganic materials that will not erode or be absorbed into the ground and has the strength to hold up a 12-story building, he said.

The strength of the slurry combined with the compacting power of the slurry pump's hydraulic pressure led Superior Slabjacking to offer a three-year guarantee of its work against "everything except acts of God" such as earthquakes or flooding, Hayes said.

"The reason we say three years is that 99 percent of settling occurs in the first three years," he said. "... Once you get past the three-year point, that material is going to last a long, long time."

As it finishes its second year in business, Superior Slabjacking is continuing to expand its revenue base and is ahead of its business plan projections, Hayes said. The company advertises through direct mailings and regularly receives referrals from concrete companies and pool maintenance firms.

"We also do a lot of networking; we are members of Realtor associations, builder associations, property managers associations," he said.

"We are trying to reach the contractors. A lot of contractors don't even know that slabjacking is available here," said Schwehm. 



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