

# Technical Career Spotlight

## Jason Smith

*Journeyman Carpenter  
Three Rivers Corporation*



*“Do the best you can and work hard as you can toward your goal,” says Jason Smith, Journeyman Carpenter at [Three Rivers Corporation](#).*

Jason knew what he wanted to do the minute he began to work with wood in his high school building trades class.

Gary Shaffner, teacher at [Bullock Creek High School](#) provided Jason instruction in the classroom, school lab and at the home building site during his high school years. The smell of the wood and the use of power tools is something Jason loved.

As part of his high school Buildings Trades class the [Associated Builders & Contractors Saginaw Valley Chapter](#) provided curriculum and Shaffner, an ABC Certified Instructor, taught the Core Class from the ABC Construction Academy. This class is the first class in a series of training programs they offer in 11-22 craft areas. The class provided information about basic commercial and industrial in industrial/commercial construction. The Core Class is required for anyone seeking training in any craft area.

Jason saw great value in career exploration and participated in two job shadows coordinated by the Career Resource Facilitator at Bullock Creek High School, Mary Ann Flaminio. One included some time spent with Mark Hansen, Foreman for Three Rivers Corporation. The [Herbert D. Doan Historical Museum](#) was the site visited. Hansen and others were working on constructing the steel structure of the museum.

Jason then participated in Mock Interview Day coordinated by [Midland County Educational Services](#)

[Agency \(ESA\)](#). Prior to the event Jason prepared a resume and letter of reference. He learned how to interview, questions that an interviewer would likely ask him and how best to answer them, physical appearance, proper attire and posture during an interview. Each business interviewer volunteers their time to meet with students, interview them and critique their portfolio and interview. Through this program a student will gain information and self confidence.

Jason interviewed on Mock Interview Day with Bob LoFiego, Director of Human Resources at Three Rivers Corporation. And the rest is history as they say. With encouragement from Bob LoFiego and a good friend, [Kurt Pudvay, Pipefitter/Welder](#) also at Three Rivers, Jason applied at Three Rivers upon graduation from high school.

Following Jason’s first year after graduating from ABC Construction Academy Three Rivers awarded Jason the “2009 Most Improved Craftsman” award. This honor is given to an individual whom the foremen from throughout Three Rivers Corporation believe has worked hard to learn, demonstrate growth and increased mastery in their craft.

*Jason Smith,  
Journeyman  
Carpenter, Three  
Rivers Corporation  
cutting one of many  
access panels to  
fireproof MidMichigan  
Medical walls.*



“Jason is very dependable, responsible and versatile,” says Wayne Sczepanski, Project Superintendent and Jason’s supervisor. “He is a quick learner and is eager to take on additional responsibilities. As a result of his competency, Jason heads up the Firewall & Smoke & Fire Damper Program. In this role he inspects, repairs if necessary and documents everything he has done.

Jason feels his greatest challenge is to continue to learn. Every day is different. As a carpenter, Jason doesn't just work with wood. He has learned a variety of structural and cosmetic skills – from framing a room, finishing drywall, and knowing firewall construction and maintenance.

“There is so much to remember,” says Jason, “every detail to doing it right and how to make it all work together. Scheduling is a big challenge. As a carpenter, we oversee the whole project including many other functions like plumbing, electrical, HVAC, cabinet installation. Everything has to be ready when the schedule says it must be ready. A delay in our work can put the project behind if we don't have the facility ready for the next step.”

Jason was assigned to MidMichigan Health System 3 years ago and done construction projects at a variety of sites. He is currently working at MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland. Jeff Fedak, Senior Project Manager, Three Rivers Corporation has 22 years with the company and 17 years with Mid Michigan Health. “Jason is the best we've seen. His skill has developed really fast.” During Jason's time at MidMichigan Health, as Fedak describes, Jason has had to learn about state and local health codes, MidMichigan Infection Control and HIPPA policies, as well as the project needs. He's attended

trainings and tested within the hospital system, and has met all their very stringent criteria.

Fedak also mentioned a special Three Rivers Corporation customer service program called “Partnering Plus.” Three Rivers staff, at all levels, must work closely with the customer to see and understand their needs. “And Jason has shown he is comfortable and a successful participant within this program.”

What does Jason find most valuable – “seeing the progress and getting stuff done right and on time.” He enjoys the daily, weekly and overall project goal-setting process, which involves the whole project team. “It makes us all work harder as a team when we know the objectives,” says Jason.

As for the future, “I want to get better at what I do and perhaps someday go into a supervisory role.”

**State of Michigan  
Average Annual Salary 2009**

Industrial Carpenter: Average	\$42,140
Range	\$33,476-\$76,232

Source: State of Michigan DELEG

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***Jason's Advice to Others!***

***“Take every opportunity to explore, set a career goal and just do it. Work as hard as you can and everything will fall into place.”***