



The Insider Update

Community Housing News

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POWER *of* PARTNERSHIPS

Meet Mr. Kenny Jenks of **KJ's General Contractors**
Building Dreams with Integrity and Precision



KJ's General Contractors, Inc. is renovating four ADA accessible units at 1826 Florence Street. Each unit will provide a home for a person with medical challenges who is also at risk of homelessness.

In the world of construction, many builders chase the bottom line, but Kenny Jenks, owner of KJ's General Contractors, Inc., chases a higher standard: the 'wow' factor. CHSA Development has partnered with KJ's General Contractors for several years. He blends a meticulous eye for detail with a craftsman's passion for quality.

Mr. Jenks didn't follow a traditional path into the trades. Before founding KJ's, he spent over 25 years as a store manager for Piggly Wiggly. He is familiar with spreadsheets, scheduling, and people skills, and that gave him a competitive edge. He noticed a gap in the market for skilled contractors with integrity and communication skills. "My company model is to make customers' dreams come true. I make your vision a reality," he says. As a general contractor, KJ's specializes in commercial construction, renovations, and major home and bathroom improvements, especially those dealing with lead paint removal.

Mr. Jenks proves that 'affordable' never has to mean 'average.' "I take trolley tour visitors to the Cove at Dundee and Dundee Cottages every month," says Anita Smith-Dixon, Executive Director of CHSA. "Tour visitors are stunned by the beauty and craftsmanship of those tiny homes built by KJ's." Currently, Jenks is building the 1826 Florence Street project, four fully handicapped accessible homes designed for individuals with health challenges. (1826 Florence Street is funded by the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund, the Civis Foundation, and the Land Bank Authority.)

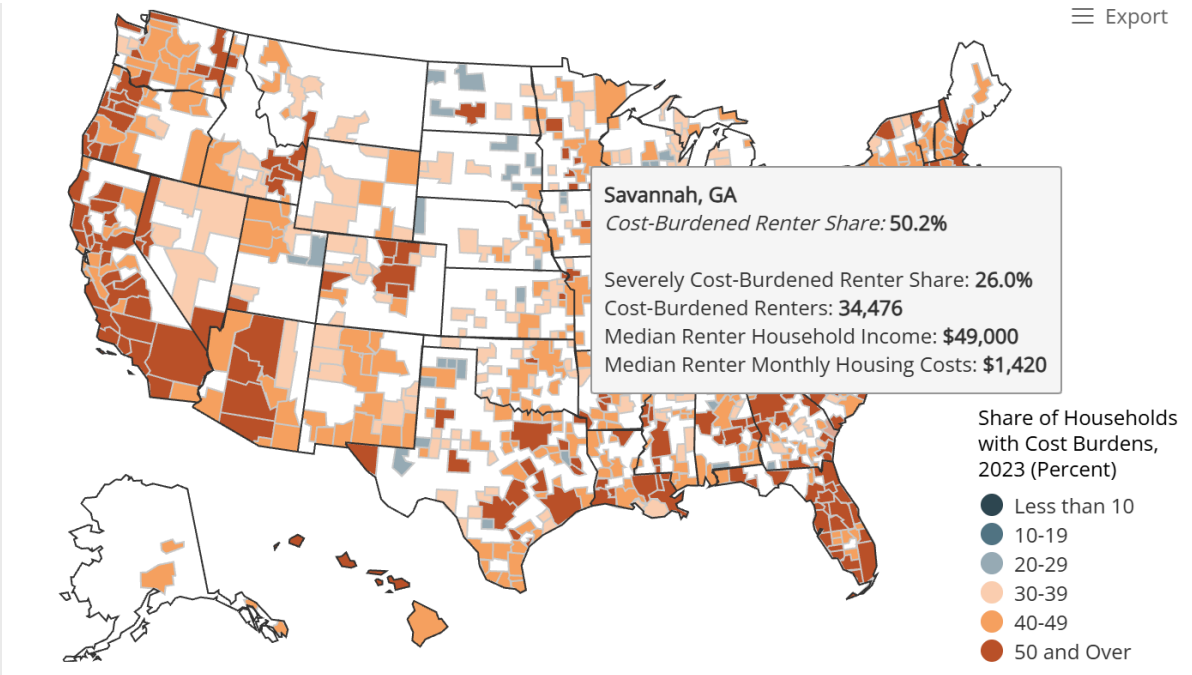
KJ's General Contractors ensures an alcohol-free and drug-free worksite, and hires staff based on trust. "When clients hand over their keys, they are in safe hands," assures Mr. Jenks. His commitment to the community extends beyond the job site. He has mentored aspiring construction workers at Harambe House, teaching blueprint reading, basic construction skills, and hand-tool safety. He is an excellent mentor for his staff. "It's not about the money. You do the job right, the money will come. We build relationships," he says.

For Mr. Jenks, the secret to success is simple: relationships over revenue.



Kenny Jenks at work on 1826 Florance Street. Both the interior and the exterior are renewed.

DID YOU KNOW?
Over Half of Renters are Cost-Burdened?



Harvard's Joint Center on Housing Research released its [2025 State of the Nation's Housing Report](#) in January. The US housing market is shrouded in uncertainty. High home prices and interest rates have pushed sales to their lowest level in 30 years; insurance premiums and property taxes are on the rise; high rents have left record numbers with cost burdens; and devastating wildfires have highlighted the growing dangers of climate disasters. And the increasing likelihood of an economic downturn threatens to deepen these challenges.

[Learn More](#)

Join our Trolley Tour Today!
CHSA Trolley Tours Inspire State-wide Teams!



The Waycross/Ware County Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) group joined the CHSA Trolley Tour of Housing Opportunities during the Fall DCA conference in Savannah on November 20.

“I had the great pleasure of attending your session at the Fall DCA conference and participated in the trolley tour showcasing the Community Housing Services Agency and partners’ work in Savannah. As a Real Estate Broker who lived in Savannah in 1999-2000, I was amazed by the dramatic transformation of the neighborhoods we visited. Anita Smith-Dixon’s presentation was especially inspiring and gave me hope for applying similar success in my own community. What an inspiration!”

--Kristie Anderson, Real Estate Agent and Broker, Waycross, GA (far right, above)

[Sign up for a Trolley Tour in 2026](#)

Construction Update!
916 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.



**When Construction Teams Need a Problem Solver
Jenise Irizarry Connects the Dots**



Jenise Irizarry has worked for CHSA and the City of Savannah as a Development Inspector since 2020. Her role involves overseeing both renovations and new construction. It's a balancing act, using her technical expertise, navigating building code compliance, and advocating for both owners and contractors.

Ms. Irizarry says, "There's a lot more that goes into the construction process than most people realize." To an outside observer, a quiet site might look like a lack of

progress. In reality, the inspector may be working off-site to solve invisible problems. Here are some common issues that can arise:

- **The Permit Labyrinth:** Coordinating between permit offices, safety offices like the fire marshal, and architects to resolve code discrepancies.
- **Site Surprises:** Discovering structural issues when opening walls in a renovation or encountering unexpected site conditions when beginning a new build.
- **Technical Troubleshooting:** Catching drafting errors in blueprints and sometimes even redrawing plans mid-stream, to ensure a project doesn't stall.

The inspector's role is to be the 'glue' for the development process. Technical assistance is more than just advice; it is active problem-solving. The inspector ensures that quality isn't sacrificed for speed. Over time, these interactions build vital relationships with contractors, ensuring long-term, smooth collaborations with CHSA's partners.

In 2024, Jenise completed most of the interior and exterior design for the homes in Savannah Gardens on Long Avenue. "I had so much fun doing that," she says. "Most of the homeowners, especially the first four, loved my design. I didn't know ahead of time, but the colors I had chosen were their favorite colors."

Executive Director Anita Smith-Dixon says, "There's a myth that an affordable home may not be as nice as a home in a more affluent neighborhood. CHSA takes great pride in creating beautiful permanent homes for households with modest incomes."

Making housing dreams come true is a joyful part of the work at CHSA. "I love seeing the people get excited when they see their house for the first time," Jenise adds. "It's wonderful seeing them make the house their own!"

Bringing Communities Together Housing United Initiative



When you invest in the Housing United Chatham Fund, every dollar is multiplied by our partners and programs to ensure that housing is attainable for all residents. CHSA provides a home for the Housing United Initiative, providing a direct link between fundraising efforts and the housing opportunities needed across all of Chatham County.

No matter where you live, there is a fund that supports YOUR local town or city, as well as county-wide efforts for larger scale development. CHSA invites your partnership! Together, we are stronger.

Your donation today can go to support:

- * Employer-Assisted Home Purchase Programs
- * Heirs' Property Programs
- * Home Repair Programs (throughout Chatham County)
- * Single Family Home Construction
- * Technical Assistance for all Developers
- * And increasing CHSA's operations throughout Chatham County!

[Donate to the Housing United Chatham Fund!](#)

Georgia Affordable Housing Coalition Conference in Savannah March 4-6

This annual meeting of Georgia's affordable housing industry is a must-attend for development, construction and management professionals. And, CHSA will offer Trolley Tours to participants again! Register soon before it sells out!



[More Info](#)



U.S. HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE & EXPO

JUNE 1-2, 2026 | DOWNTOWN SHERATON | DALLAS
Governments: No-Cost Registration through March 6, 2026

[More info](#)

US Housing & Community Development Conference

Join 800+ industry experts for networking and insights into creative financing structures, public-private partnerships, and nonprofit-driven development models designed to expand housing across the nation.

Help us share good news!

Please share our newsletter with friends and colleagues!
Each month, we bring you updates on the projects and partners who contribute to affordable housing in Savannah!

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