An Ide Al d es Ign
Unruh chose the Nexus Grand Teton model, purchasing two 30-by-132-foot bays in 2010. Over the next few years he added two more bays of this size, and in 2013 went with a larger 42-by-132-foot bay for the greenhouse’s fifth.

“Zach was transitioning from NFT [nutrient film technique] to rafts and the 42-foot house was a perfect fit for the rafts,” said Jerry Bleckley, Nexus Southeastern sales manager. “Nexus has

### GROWING GREENS IN GEORGIA

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Zachary Unruh, Stone Creek Hydroponics

Stone Creek Hydroponics, a family-owned and operated farm in northeast Georgia, knows how to adapt to customer needs. When owner Zachary Unruh started the business in 2010, he grew basil and other herbs. Soon, customers began requesting lettuce. Today, Stone Creek grows a mix of bibb, frisée, red oak leaf, and green and red romaine for restaurants and grocery stores in the Atlanta market.

Unruh needed a structure that could handle the equipment associated with growing hydroponic lettuce. He consulted a colleague who had experience using Nexus greenhouses.

“The guy I started farming with did a lot of research and chose Nexus because he said they were the best ones out there,” Unruh said. “I saw his greenhouse and I liked what I saw. It was all word-of-mouth.”

### AN IDEAL DESIGN

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Nexus designed a system large enough to accommodate Stone Creek’s NFT troughs.
the capacity to manufacture specific width to fit the client’s needs for either of these systems or other vegetable crops.”

The Grand Teton system can support a number of coverings without altering the house’s structure. Stone Creek’s system has polycarbonate sides with a plastic roof. Although snow is rarely an issue for Unruh in Georgia, the roof is designed to handle a heavy load should an extreme weather event occur. The structure also can withstand high winds. The Grand Teton’s galvanized steel trusses and Tenzaloy column gaps and gutter saddles enhance the strength of the house, and a baked-on white enamel coating provides corrosion resistance to the top of the pre-galvanized gutter system.

“These are very well-designed greenhouses; I’m very happy with them,” Unruh said.

The Grand Teton offers sidewalls from 8 to 14 feet tall. Stone Creek’s sidewalls are 10 feet high, which Unruh says is vital for the greenhouse’s location.

“In the South, the higher the sidewalls go, the better off you are because you can control the atmosphere inside better,” Unruh said. Improved condensate control is achieved through the design of a modified Gothic arch, which offers a steeper slope. This shape also leaves plenty of room for hanging equipment and moving crops.

**COMPARISON SHOPPING**

Stone Creek’s greenhouse system includes an automatic shade cloth, a wet wall on one end, and an automatic vent door. The unit is controlled by a computer system.

“When you compared them, the other brands were a bit cheaper because they cut corners on a lot of things, and the structure wasn’t as good,” Unruh said. “But when you compared apples to apples, after upgrading the features of the other brands, they were about the same price.”

Overall, Unruh was pleased with the service and support he has received from Bleckley.

“I have seen Zach and his company mature in the past few years and I have seen his sons run all around the greenhouse. They are so cute,” Bleckley said. “It has been a pleasure to see both develop—the business and his young family.”

Unruh plans to add at least two more bays from Nexus in the near future. “They have a great sales team. I can call them and get quotes from them at any time,” Unruh said. “They’ve been in business for a long time. Every farm needs something different and they know exactly what I need.”