Ironwood Commercial Builders, Inc.

Nancy Brinkerhoff, CEO/President

How long have you been in business?

We have been in business since January 2007.

How and when was the business started?

We started ICBI with the goal of becoming one of the most respected drywall/plaster companies in the industry. ICBI has always been a union contractor specializing in metal framing, drywall, lath and plaster, and fireproofing. When we began in 2007, we ran the company from our home office, then moved to a property we own close by. We now have two additional locations, one in Oakland, California, and the other in San Francisco, California. We perform all commercial work, with public work focus as 80 percent of our annual revenue.

How many employees do you have?

Currently we have 60 employees.

When did you become a woman-owned business?

We qualified as woman-owned in 2009.

Can you explain the process of becoming a woman-owned business?

In the construction industry, it's a difficult process to certify as woman-owned. It can take several months to get certified. There is no single institution that covers all certifications you need to prove WBE status; therefore, you must obtain many different certifications with many different institutions you are interested in bidding with. You must own at least 51 percent of your company and have control of all day-to-day operations. Each institution you qualify with has a different set of requirements. We need to be recertified annually for most certificates, so you will go through the process more than once.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

First of all, we pride ourselves on our quality of work. Our strategic advantage has been the ability to provide the set-aside goals many projects require on publicly funded and sometimes privately funded work. With ICBI being a fairly new company to the marketplace, the WBE, SBE, DBE status has opened doors for us that would not otherwise have been an option.

Can you speak to the importance of being a WACA member/contractor?

The Wall And Ceiling Alliance has been one of the best networking and educational experiences for me and my company. Members in both the drywall industry and the plaster industry coming together as one association has not only furthered our presence in the industry, it has helped us to connect with others going through the same issues during the economic downturn in our industry and has provided us with a wealth of knowledge. The technical support WACA provides has also given us an advantage in the marketplace. They've helped provide alternatives to our clients and architects regarding what products and industry standards are available as additional information to what they currently know and use.

What special projects are you currently working on?

We are currently contracted to perform the entire exterior package on Highland Hospital ACT (nine stories) and just completed Highland Hospital Satellite Office Building. We have been awarded the Underground Central Subway in San Francisco — this is a landmark project with three stations ranging from Chinatown to Union Square to Moscone Center.

Are there any special accomplishments you would like to mention?

I am proud to hold the following positions in the industry and very proud to be the first woman-owned business to sit on the WACA board:

1. Current president of the board of directors of the Bay Area Builders Exchange
2. Current officer/treasurer and board member of WACA
3. Current trustee of the Plaster Pension Trust Fund and the chair of Plaster Health and Welfare Trust Fund
4. Very proud member of NAWIC
5. Member of the first women's forum nationwide in our wall and ceiling industry
6. First woman board member of AWCI representing all of northern California