# Bear Scaffold and Services

by Mike Peters, President, Bear Scaffold and Services

BEAR SCAFFOLD AND SERVICES

*How does a subcontractor compete in the wall and ceiling business? By learning how to be the best — not only at suspending entire buildings, but also suspending any doubts about even the toughest jobs.*

Bear Scaffold and Services is only in its third year. We've already worked with Anning-Johnson Company, J&J Acoustics, Bayside Interiors, Daley's Drywall, California Drywall and other big WACA members. For one of our first jobs, we had over $1 million in contracts on the Levi's Stadium, the home of the San Francisco 49ers, with several different contractors including Bayside and California Drywall.

We're a scaffolding company. We also do stair towers, or primary access stair towers as they're known, that go up the whole structure for workers to have access on and off each level. Bear Scaffold does shoring as well, occasionally suspending entire structures up in the air for our clients. A large part of our construction effort focuses on building huge decks, like we did for the Levi's Stadium. They're also called "dance floors," with some in excess of 80 feet wide by 150 feet long while standing over 100 feet tall. We'll get those assembled just so contractors can access and work on the ceilings. It's pretty wild when you see them all built. You have to crane your neck back to see just how tall they are when you're looking all the way up at them.

Currently, one of our jobs is with Balfour Beatty on 995 Market Street in San Francisco. It's a nationwide contractor, and its Northern California division has a project in San Francisco that's one of the tallest scaffold jobs in the city right now. It's over 200 feet high and has been engineered from scratch.

The bulk of our work is really throughout Northern California. About half our work tends to be in San Francisco and the rest throughout the Bay Area. Silicon Valley, specifically, with the construction of all the schools, hospitals and high-tech companies, is more and more a major contributor to our business. However, we've worked in Redding, Sacramento and Fresno, and as far south as Paso Robles doing the major shopping center and movie theater there.

Our business is expanding beyond its current reach. Recent special projects include the Levi's Stadium and the Avaya Stadium, the home of San Jose Earthquakes, which opened in March. We have worked on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park and on multiple jobs for Google, the Apple Campus and LinkedIn, where we provided primary access stair towers. Bear Scaffold is currently helping over 100 construction projects move forward in Northern California. We operate with a lean count of roughly 35 employees, who are all union — an extraordinary assembly considering the project-to-employee ratio.

Our success and longevity can be summed up briefly: We've done well because we don't say no. The big contractors aren't known for liking *no*. They want to hear *yes*. We might not be yes men, so to speak, but we find solutions and focus on safety first, above all. With that, we ensure the yes. These compa-

nies know, either from previous experience with us or from our reputation with other firms, that we absolutely work to provide the yes.

Even more important in the equation is our service. When it comes down to it, everyone's got the same 12-foot plank, the same cross, and the same or similar equipment. But we sell service. We're big on that. In

fact, 75 percent of our business is repeat business. We'll bid some new work here and there, but it's mostly repeat. With some companies, we've had more than 80 jobs with them. So again, they know the quality of work they'll get from us.

Adaptability might be another reason why our business has done so well. "No job is too large or too small" is part of the philosophy making up the company's success. We've executed every type of project, from a $1,500 job intended to allow a contractor to change a single light bulb to providing scaffolding for $1 million subcontracting jobs on massive $1 billion projects in the heart of Silicon Valley.

And the most important reason why Bear Scaffold has succeeded in the business? Our employees — the staff. We have the best people here, which are reasons that should give us many more years in the industry to come.

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