

# Customer Favorite

PATTILLO CONSTRUCTION EXCELS AT SERVING MANUFACTURING CLIENTS. BY ALAN DORICH



» Pattillo Construction's recent work includes a facility for Beretta in Gallatin, Tenn.

When Pattillo Construction Corp. finishes another successful project, it is thanks to a true team effort, owner and Chairperson Bree Pattillo says. "We pull people together at the beginning of the job and they work through it together, showing their support along the way," she says.

Based in Atlanta, Pattillo Construction provides general contracting, construction management and design/build services for clients in the Southeast United States. It focuses primarily on industrial and manufacturing facilities.

The company, which has been an independent family owned business for the majority of its years, began as Pattillo-Brittain in 1946. That year, Bree Pattillo's great-grandfather, H.A. Pattillo founded the company with his sons, Pat and Dan Pattillo.

The three funded it with \$2,000 they had saved in a mason jar and earned from picking cotton. Initially, they built churches and schools, but over time, the company moved into industrial projects.

"They saw that manufacturing brought

jobs to the community, and that's what they wanted to do: bring jobs to the South," Bree Pattillo explains, noting that the company still does this today. "We have a niche with manufacturing."

Today, Pattillo Construction is 100 percent women-owned, with Bree Pattillo taking a hands-on approach, often found on job sites and in meetings with clients. The company has been majority women-owned since 2002.

In addition, Pattillo Construction is debt free and has \$100 million in bonding capacity. To date, the company has built more than 1,000 facilities that total 70,000,000 square feet, and employs LEED certified professionals.

Sixty-five percent of the company's business consists of repeat customers, while the rest is often earned through relationships and word of mouth. "We're the industrial builder of the South and committed to the success of every project that we do," COO Frank Wartner declares, noting that its recent work includes a facility for Beretta in Gallatin, Tenn. The company also recently finished two projects for Boeing in North

Charleston, S.C. "One was an \$88 million facility for their interiors manufacturing process," he recalls, noting that the other was a \$68 million facility for Boeing.

Pattillo Construction recently started work on a project for KSM Castings USA Inc. in Shelby, N.C. "That is an expansion to an existing manufacturing facility that makes castings for the automotive industry," Wartner explains.

The general contractor also is building a project for one of its repeat clients, Shimano

## *Pattillo Construction Corp.*

[www.pattilloconstruction.com](http://www.pattilloconstruction.com)

- 2015 sales: \$120 million
- Headquarters: Atlanta
- Employees: 40



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Inc., a manufacturer of fishing reels and bicycle gears. "It's their office and showroom for the eastern United States," he says, noting that it will be located in North Charleston.

Daikin Applied, a manufacturer of cooling towers and chillers, also has hired the company. "We're doing plant renovations in their facility in Verona, Va.," Wartner says.

### Leading the Way

As a fourth generation owner of Pattillo Construction, Bree Pattillo possesses all the core strengths of the family leadership that came before her and an immense passion for the business. "It's an honor [to lead the company]," she says.

Pattillo has learned the business from an early age, when she accompanied her grandfather and mother on job sites. These trips helped instill the values she holds today regarding relationships with employees, subcontractors and communities. Her values system is uncompromising in selecting and keeping construction professionals of the highest integrity and character within the industry.

After graduating from university, she was stationed in several U.S. locations as her husband served in the U.S. Navy's submarine service. During that time, Pattillo worked for a construction management company and a road construction company in Charleston, S.C.

In addition, she holds an MBA from The Citadel, a general contractor's license in six states, is certified as a LEED accredited professional and is an alumni of Leadership Georgia.

Under her guidance, Pattillo Construction enjoys an exceptionally strong management team with a combined 17 decades of construction experience. She also gives back to the community by serving as the chairperson on the board of a private school in Atlanta focused on gifted students, and is involved in Girl Scouts of America along with several charitable foundations.

### Best in the Business

Bree Pattillo praises her team at Pattillo Construction, which strives to recruit and retain the best in the business. "The people are what make it successful," she declares.

Currently, the company has a diversified mix of industry professionals with more than 30 years in the industry, along with experienced military veterans, master degree graduates in construction, engineering degree graduates and university level interns.

But the company continues to keep its employees' skills sharp. It provides ongoing training in areas such as safety, green building, subcontractor contracts, insurance, start-up and closeout procedures, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program, project scheduling, and the operation of forklifts and man lifts.

Pattillo Construction also rewards its staff with scholarship opportunities for employees and their children, as well as liberal vacation and health benefits, with employer contributions. Additionally, the company provides flexible schedules to allow for a work/life balance when needed.

"A stocked office kitchen provides convenience for [our] staff and also promotes camaraderie along with the quarterly fun days," the company says. "Bi-monthly 'make it better' meetings with [the] owner are held, giving staff opportunities to brainstorm and participate in ongoing improvements."

The firm also values its relationships with subcontractors. "Partnership-relationships with subcontractors are nurtured to keep [them as] strong providers in the industry," Pattillo Construction says.

### Road to Recovery

The dedication of Pattillo Construction's staff proved to be essential during the recent recession. "It was a scary time," Bree Pattillo recalls, noting that her employees rallied together to help pull the company through.

Fortunately, Pattillo Construction is seeing its markets recover, Wartner says. "The automotive, food processing, distribution and aerospace industries along with second-tier suppliers are building up slightly," he says, noting that these markets fit well in the company's niche, which consists of facilities that range from 100,000 to 350,000 square feet.

The company also builds distribution warehouses. "But as we move into the future, we're going to be doing more manufacturing facilities and see more upgrades to existing facilities," Wartner predicts.

As its clients' industries change, "They're either adding lines for manufacturing or they're changing lines," he says, noting that this often means the addition of new equipment for its clients.

"We had to raise a roof on one facility to get some equipment in," Wartner recalls. "We want to be their provider for whatever they do in the future."

### A Safe Family

Pattillo Construction focuses on keeping its employees safe, Bree Pattillo says. "This is a family business, and I want to keep my employees safe at all times. This is their family away from home, but at the end of each day we want every employee to return home to their own family safely," she declares.

Part of this focus includes employing a full-time safety manager who works directly with the company's chosen third-party safety company and superintendents, Wartner says. "Our superintendents are all OSHA-trained," he adds. "We're constantly monitoring safety in the field with routine visits and continual training as well." The company's superintendents also conduct daily inspections to the project sites, he adds.

### Nice and Easy

Pattillo Construction recently grew with the move to a new, 12,000-square-foot headquarters in Atlanta. "We did the build-out ourselves," Bree Pattillo says, noting that the company also completed the interior work.

The new facility has been a hit with employees, thanks to its location in the center of the city, which is closer to their homes. "It's convenient, nice and easy to get around," Wartner says.

Pattillo predicts more, steady growth for her family's company. "I see us focusing on what we're really good at, which is manufacturing," she says. "We can build any building and expand from there."

Wartner agrees. "What we want to be known for is helping bring manufacturing jobs back to the good old U.S.A.," he says. "We would like to see the U.S.A. where it used to be: heavy in manufacturing and jobs, and exporting goods overseas to other countries around the globe." ♦

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