



**EDITH GREEN-WENDELL WYATT**  
FEDERAL BUILDING MODERNIZATION

# Small Business Success

**Alliance Industrial Group (AIG)** owners, Lisa and Jim Buchan, were both raised in families who worked in construction and the trades for several generations. After high school Jim entered local 701 Operating Engineers. Lisa joined local 29 Ironworkers in 2003 and is a current member. They started building houses together and then in February 2001 they started AIG as a structural steel erection company. In 2007 to improve product quality and scheduling, Lisa and Jim founded Alpha Iron, which is a steel fabrication shop. AIG is now a full service steel fabrication and erection company. In addition to working for General Services Administration (GSA) and Howard S. Wright (HAS) on the Edith Green Wendell Wyatt (EGWW) Federal Building Modernization project, AIG has extensive experience in the high technology industry in Hillsboro, OR., Santa Clara, CA., and Chandler, AZ.

AIG's scope at EGWW is to fabricate and install the steel for the completion of the tower core and the tower floor extensions, the solar canopy frame, and the west side façade on which the shading reeds are attached.

Benefits from AIG's involvement at EGWW have included:

The high visibility of EGWW in downtown Portland has provided a great opportunity for AIG to showcase their work to their bankers, bonders, and other current and potential customers. Jim shared that an executive from Hoffman Construction was looking out his office window and commented that he wanted the company that was doing the steel at EGWW on his job.

EGWW has also given AIG the opportunity to spotlight the high quality staff they employ. Barney Volk was among the first workers on EGWW to receive a Best in Class recognition. To date since the start of the project, AIG has employed 28 people at EGWW, including 12 hired specifically for this job and all are still employed.

About the time that the economic slowdown was beginning, Jim put a banner up in their shop that reads "World Class" and he spoke to the AIG crew about needing to be world class fabricators and installers in an economy that was slowing down and becoming more competitive. He and Lisa talked about this and Lisa made the decision to make a significant capital investment in high technology equipment so that their employees had the equipment to create and install world class product.

They purchased unique equipment including the Python Robotic CNC that runs off of BIM modeling using Tekla Software at a substantial cost. This state of the art equipment helps them produce product that meets the tightest specifications, is of the highest quality, and can be erected efficiently and safely. Fabricating the product for EGWW on this equipment has provided AIG the opportunity to demonstrate to GSA, HSW and all other stakeholders that AIG is a high quality business that is investing in technology to keep their competitive edge.



Lessons learned while working on the EGWW project include:

1. The GSA and HSW have been wonderful to work for and are capable of producing a productive work environment.
2. Alliance cooperation between operations and finance resulted in a successful project. Alliance used this project as their pilot project in their revised preconstruction process and their monthly project performance review.
3. Alliance learned that their fabrication shop is capable of very large projects with tight tolerances.
4. From Barney Volk "The lesson I learned is that there is nothing more important to being successful than having a team you can count on such as I did at AIG and HSW; to work with you in solving problems, support you in your decisions and always making time to discuss new ideas"

## FAST FACTS

**Project:** Renovate GSA's Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt federal building creating a high performance green building consistent with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) intention.

**Location:** Portland, Oregon

**Impacts:** Opportunity for local small businesses, workers, families, commuters, and students.

**Contract Value:** \$5,435,438

**Company:** Alliance Industrial Group

**Partners:** Howard S. Wright, SERA Architects