

Wilkins General Contracting & Overhead Doors

In today's economic atmosphere we all have to find a way to keep our businesses profitable. Many contractors have found that specializing in one product or service may not be enough to get them through these slow times. Instead, offering a multitude of products and services has become key. Providing full residential new-home construction as well as smaller remodels or additions or even crossing over into light commercial construction is quickly becoming a way for contractors to stay afloat. Bill Wilkins of Wilkins General Contracting was diversified long before the current market downturn. Maybe that's why even now he has plenty of work to do and is months out on many projects.

Bill began his contracting career in the mid 70's working for Pope Brothers Lumber Company in Linton, Indiana. He started there as a general laborer working in the lumber yard where he gained experience in everything lumber related, including selling whole-house packages. Seeing an opportunity in construction, Bill joined the carpenters union in 1979. He started as an apprentice and learned even more as he applied and sharpened his skills.

For two years work was

plentiful. Then in the early 80's, work slowed down and the union situation dried up. Bill decided to venture out on his own. He offered his services as a roofing contractor and the customer calls started rolling in. Bill had developed a reputation as an honest entrepreneur, gathering referrals all over the area. With this type of growing reputation Bill's customers started asking for more than just roofing. First it was room additions then kitchens, pole barns and all types of home improvements. By 2000 Bill was running four to six months behind with a long list of satisfied clientele from each successful project.

Bill's experience that doing a good job on any project is only possible if you have a good team of employees, subcontractors and suppliers. Bill put together a team of experts in every area including Bender Lumber as his primary building materials supplier. "When I'm in a pinch the Bender Lumber pro yard in Linton gets it done," Bill Says. "Service is a big deal to me, buying from the big box stores doesn't cut it and the savings don't add up."

Bill has also found a partner at Bender Lumber, his Contractor Sales Representa-



Mr. Bill Wilkins of Wilkins General Contracting and overhead doors alongside Bender Lumber Company salesman Matt Baker.

tive Matt Baker. "He treats my business as though it was his own. He keeps me informed on the latest products and news from the building industry," says Bill. "Matt is also a great networking person for all contractors and subcontractors in the area. He's referred Wilkins Contracting to many customers he has met in the store."

Managing all that business requires some good help. Bill's wife Robin is willing to do whatever it takes to help get the job done. You might find her paying the bills, doing general office work or even helping out as labor on a jobsite. Bill says, "She is a valuable partner in the business."

With all that Bill has going for him you might think all he does is work and indeed

when you enjoy what you do, as Bill does, it is tempting to work all the time. Bill keeps a balance by leaving town many weekends to camp and jet-ski with his six grandchildren. I will not divulge his secret hiding place but you can be sure it is a quite, restful spot. Bill is also very active with the Elk's organization where he serves on the House Committee whose main function is putting together Christmas baskets for needy families.

At Bender Lumber we know the value of having satisfied, loyal customers like Bill. Clients tell us each day about the valuable people that serve their business. Thanks to the loyalty of Bill and those like him, we are looking forward to what the future holds for all of us!