

RUSSELL-FILAND BUILDERS, INC.



PURSUING EXCELLENCE—WHEN GOOD IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

by Christopher Cussat

Above: Shelly D. Russell, president of Russell-Filand Builders, Inc., wants the builder to be known as the most relied upon and trusted retail contractor that any of its clients have ever worked with.

ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT saving the environment is the responsibility of every individual, it is also true that large organizations can generally have greater, positive effects on the environment simply because any green policies they implement will necessarily have results that are larger in scale. Perhaps this simple truth partly inspired Russell-Filand Builders, Inc. (RFB) to strive to focus on the unique needs of retailers, while at the same time, promoting sustainable practices to all its clients. According to president, Shelly D. Russell, RFB uses the LEED

for Commercial Interiors program as its construction benchmark, while the company is specifically dedicated to building sustainable, retail business spaces. “We strive to be at the top of the game by providing green construction options for retail buildings, and RFB’s priority is to effectively meet the specialized needs of our clients.”

Going hand-in-hand with sustainable practices, energy efficiency is also an important professional consideration for RFB and its clients. Says Russell, “Green building is essentially about

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Shelly D. Russell, President

constructing healthier, higher performance retail stores, fine-tuning what we have already done for years, and finding alternative or better ways to build with the resources and materials that are available.”

Some of the green practices that RFB incorporates into its projects:

- diverting most waste products from landfills to local recycling programs;
- overseeing the installation of energy-efficient lighting, HVAC equipment, energy management controls, and low-water-use plumbing fixtures;
- enforcing the exclusive use of low-VOC or non-contaminating materials;
- implementing and supervising an indoor air quality management plan to reduce and isolate construction process contamination throughout the retail space and mechanical systems;
- creating pathway interruption to eliminate employee and occupant exposure to contamination within the retail space, both during and after construction.

Utilizing these and other sustainable building practices gives RFB a competitive edge. “With trends in the marketplace moving toward green practices, and as more retailers recognize the potential, long-term savings that come with building green and using LEED prescribed methods, the demand will be greater for LEED-accredited and experienced builders [like RFB], as well as other green-minded professionals.” She believes that this change, along with the growing LEED emphasis within the

retail industry, gives RFB an advantage over those of its competitors that have not learned new, sustainable building processes and standards.

Russell believes that RFB is also very competitive because it focuses on one industry, major retailers. Such focus allows RFB to provide its clients with the higher level of specialized service they require, especially due to the fast-track pace of retail construction.

RUSSELL-FILAND BUILDERS, INC.
AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Phoenix, AZ

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
Retail construction

ANNUAL SALES: \$35 million+

EMPLOYEES: 40+



RETAIL GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Shelly D. Russell, President 623-412-8999 Office
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Glendale, AZ 85308

Offering the following services:

*Quality Construction Services
LEED Services/USGBC Member
Permit Expediting
Pre-Bid/Pre-Permit Plan Review
Conceptual Estimating / Budgeting*



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Shelly D. Russell, President

According to Russell, RFB's success is largely due to the company's highly skilled, trained, and motivated employees. But she believes that there is always room for growth and improvement. "Our short-term goals are to continue educating our existing team, and improving our internal processes, including green building practices." She is also determined to have the best group of professionals that the retail construction market has to offer. "RFB's entire team thrives on the pace and challenges that are necessary to complete retail construction projects successfully. We have always known that it is our people who have allowed us to gain the respect and trust of our customers."

Although an emphasis on environmental consciousness may not yet be the rule in general construction, Russell already sees green building as the current norm in retail construction. "We are in the midst of the mainstream of the marketplace. Over the past few years we have seen [environmental] consciousness in retail construction begin to change and RFB takes pride in being a part of that growth." She sees a trend with shopping center developers whereby entire centers are working toward LEED certification. "We feel this is just the beginning of the changes that the green movement will bring."

If a formula works, Russell sees no reason to change it. "Our long-term goals are to continue our moderate and controlled growth, while working with our select group of customers that require service, quality, and cost efficiencies. Rather than being driven

to increase volume as a way to be more profitable, we are concentrating on doing a better job for a better client." So for now, RFB will continue to focus on its strengths, and plans to stay centered on what the company has repeatedly proven it can do extremely well—retail construction. Russell concludes, "While other types of construction may also provide profits and growth, they only will allow us to be 'good' at many types of construction, and not 'excellent' at retail—which is where the heart of our company is." GBQ

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