

Truex Preferred Construction

A builder within the community better serves the community.

Story by Rusty Pray



Front Row: Michelle Wojtowicz, Andrea Truex, Bill Truex
Center: Travis Wofford
Back Row: Kale Dailey, Brian Hillman, Mitch Eby, Paul Wojtowicz



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There are two types of builders.

There's the builder who operates out of a glass office in a high-rise. You might talk to him on the office phone. You might meet him once when the contracts are being signed.

And then there's the local guy, a guy like Bill Truex. You'll talk to him on his cell. You'll meet him before the contracts are signed, when a handshake will carry the same weight as the documents themselves. You'll bump into him somewhere in town.

"We're who you see at the restaurant, a charity event, the grocery store or anywhere else around town," Bill said. "You're not going to see the big-box guys. They're from out of town."

The president of Truex Preferred Construction, Bill has been a builder here since 1992 – a year after he and his wife, Andrea, moved to the Englewood area.

They're originally from Indiana. In fact, Bill holds a degree in economics from Indiana University. He worked for several companies, including AT&T and Roadway Express, before becoming involved in real estate and construction. Andrea has her master's degree in nursing leadership from Florida State University and also works at the local community hospital.

Bill and Andrea started Truex Preferred Construction in 2005. They made a conscious decision to put their family name on the company to hold themselves and their employees to maintaining its reputation in the community. Bill is a licensed contractor with the designation from the National Association of Homebuilders as a Graduate Builder and Green Building professional, and he is certified in mold remediation. He is well-known in the construction industry.

Andrea, the company's vice president, takes care of human resources and marketing. She is also responsible for nurturing the company's vision as well as its direction. That vision is clearly stated on the company's website, www.truexpreferrredconstruction.com. Truex Preferred Construction is "known for Doing the Right Thing for our customers, suppliers, subcontractors, and our community. Quality construction, customer service and satisfaction are the cornerstones of our business. We promise to provide personalized service to all those with whom we do business and together build dreams and relationships."

The company employs seven if you count Bill – and he counts himself as an employee. Other key employees are Paul and Michelle Wojtowicz, who have been with the company for 12 years. Paul wears many hats as construction administrator; Michelle is the controller.

They are all proud of the company they've created, one that has earned them an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

They are equally proud of their word as bond, a concept that applies evenly across jobs large and small. Truex Preferred Construction completed a \$4 million exterior and interior renovation on the



A sample of Truex Preferred Construction's commercial projects around town (clockwise from above): Weston's Wanna B inn interior and exterior renovation; Farlow's on the Water interior and exterior renovation; Lighthouse Grill renovation; and Mary Brown's Diner new construction

WannaB Inn, formerly Weston's Resort, an 80-unit, 17-building vacation resort on the southern end of Manasota Key.

The project started on a handshake.

"I gave information to the CEO," Bill recalled. "I told them I'd been through all the buildings. These were my worksheets on what I felt had to be done – the estimated costs – and he shook my hand right there and said, 'I got my contract.'"

"So, we went to work for him. Literally, until I had to pull a permit, we didn't have a contract. We had an agreement. That's how we started that project."

That's simply something an out-of-town builder can't do.

"There's more buy-in from a hometown builder," Bill said. "That's not to say that the big-boxer builders don't bring value. But they're more a production style, and we're more custom to your case, your desires."

Mary Brown's Diner on Placida Road in Englewood is another success story.

Paul Shelley, who owns the local franchise of the Canadian eatery chain,

was having trouble getting to an opening last spring.

"...We had the wrong contractor and had one serious construction problem after another. Finally, Bill Truex and his construction company pulled us out of a jam and did a fantastic job for us," Shelley said.

Truex Preferred Construction is also proud of its renovation project at Farlow's on the Water, a gathering place in the community, as well as the Lighthouse Grill at Stump Pass.

In terms of personal touch, Truex Preferred Construction performs another service that the out-of-towner, the "big-box" guy, can't.

"We make changes on the fly," Bill noted. "There are builders who won't even talk about making changes to their floor plans."

And that can lead to misunderstandings, problems that go unresolved, and customers who are less than satisfied.

"People start to see things come together, and they don't see things





three dimensionally,” Bill said. “So, they’re looking at a plan. They change the layout. It starts getting built. And they realize it’s really not enough or not exactly what they wanted.

“We make those changes on the fly. We will meet with them, decide what the best move is and what result they’re looking for, and we make those adjustments.”

In talking about making changes on the fly – a customized service if there ever was one – Bill recalled a just-completed project on Rock Creek Drive, off Midway Boulevard in Port Charlotte.

The owner “came in during framing and after framing” he said. “She had a lot of things she wanted to change because it wasn’t exactly what she was looking for. So, we took some stuff out, we moved some stuff around.”

And satisfied the customer.

Truex Preferred Construction features 17 models of homes, from the 2,072-square-foot Banyan to the 5,152-square-foot Paradise. They also offer customers the ability to design and build a custom home.

Community activism is something else a hometown builder can deliver. Bill is well-vested in the community. He has been involved in numerous organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Habitat for Humanity, Lemon Bay Sunrise Rotary and the local Chamber of Commerce and Building Association. He also umpired baseball for 18 years.

He is now in his second four-year term as a Charlotte County commissioner. He is the board chairman and serves on a myriad of local and state committees.

“To me,” he said, “having somebody who gives back to the community, I think, is very important.

“It’s Charlotte County we’re talking about, but it’s still a small-town feel. It is extremely important for people to know who they are doing business with – the old saying of being able to do a handshake and not have to worry about it.”

He has earned industry recognition from many organizations, including the Florida Home Builders Association Remodeler of the Year in 2015; the Presidential Advocacy Award from the Florida Association of Counties in 2015 and 2014; Readers’ Choice awards from the Charlotte Sun in 2010 and the

Englewood Sun in 2011, 2012 and 2014; Englewood Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business in 2008 and 2011; and the Charlotte-DeSoto Building Industry Association Builder of the Year in 2010.

Bill has the credentials establishing him as a bulwark of the community, and his company has the credentials affirming its ability to specialize in all phases of construction.

“We do residential and commercial construction, both new and remodeling,” Bill said. “Our commercial aspects now are restaurants, offices and resorts. We are one of the few builders in the area able to do carbon fiber repairs.

“What I want people to understand is, we can help them whether they own a business or own a home. We can handle it.”

Truex Preferred Construction brings to the table things like familiarity with local geography and demographics. It’s local. It lives next door to the projects it takes on.

It is family-owned.

It is built on the values of hard work, vision and unequaled performance. Bill and Andrea together bring a single-minded focus on quality and doing what is right for the client.

Of course, none of this means anything if you’re not good at what you do.

But then, Truex Preferred Construction is all of that.