

Meet Some of the Small Businesses that Built Concourse E at PDX

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We recently unveiled a **brand-new Concourse E** at the Portland International Airport, which features new shops and dining options, curated artwork, comfortable spots to relax and recharge, and a sweeping wall of windows showcasing Mt. Hood.

It took 1,500 days and more than 2,000 people to bring Concourse E to life.

Many of those workers represented local small businesses from the region. We are grateful we had a partner in Skanska – the prime contractor for this work – to help us engage and celebrate these companies.







This isn't the first time Skanska worked with the Port to empower small businesses. The construction company serves as a mentor in the **Port's Mentor Protégé Program**, which has brought together more than 100 small businesses with established companies to help them grow. Over the course of two years, mentors consult on business plans, contracts and financials – better positioning these small businesses to earn work with public agencies like the Port in the future.

The program helped seven Mentor Protégé graduates secure contracts for this Concourse E project: **Azuri Construction**, **Chick of All Trades**, **Diverse Works**, **Green Man Construction**, **O'Neill Construction Group**, **Professional Lath and Plaster** and **Sign Wizards**.

We connected with a few of these leaders to learn what this project – and the program – meant to them.



Jacob Hashimoto's aerial kite-like sculptures are an inviting feature on the new Concourse E

How did the Mentor Protégé Program help your business?

“It's changed my life in so many ways,” said Nathaniel Hartley with Professional Lath and Plaster, who graduated from the Mentor Protégé Program this summer. “Not only my business life, but my personal life as well in talking to the value of being well organized. The program taught me the value of having the right people in the right position.”

Heather Watkins, president of Green Man Construction, echoed Hartley's comments – adding that the expanded networking opportunities and expertise of larger, established companies had the most impact on her business. “I'm a huge proponent of not having to

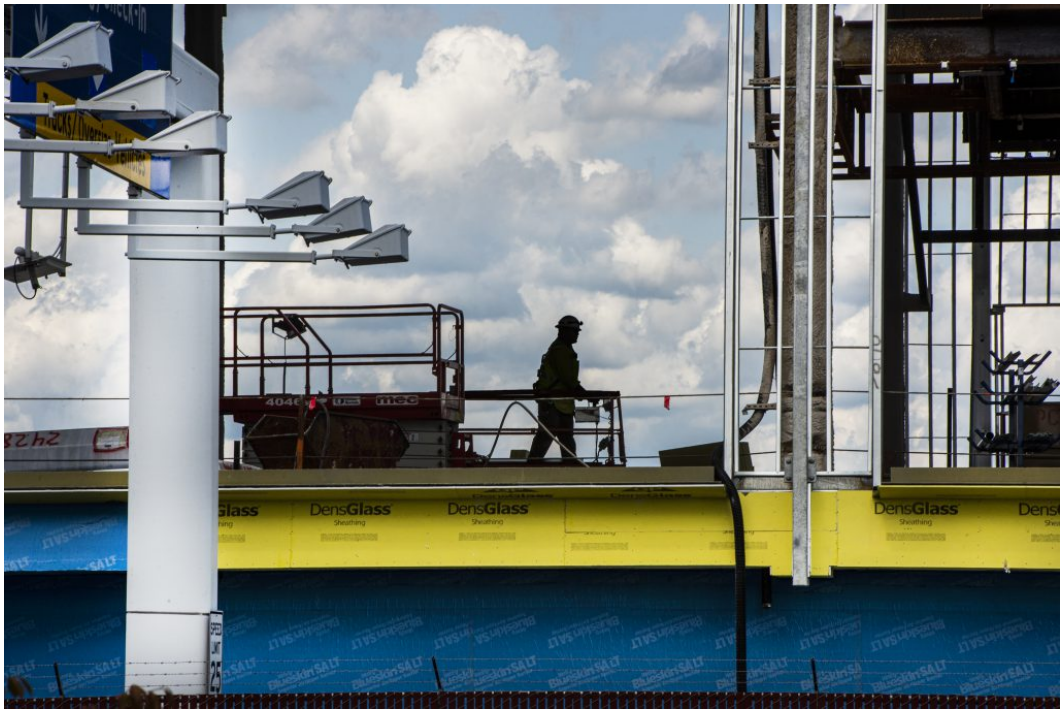
reinvent the wheel, and the Mentor Protégé Program helped us leverage the experience of others,” said Watkins, whose company supplied frames and supplied and installed doors and hardware.

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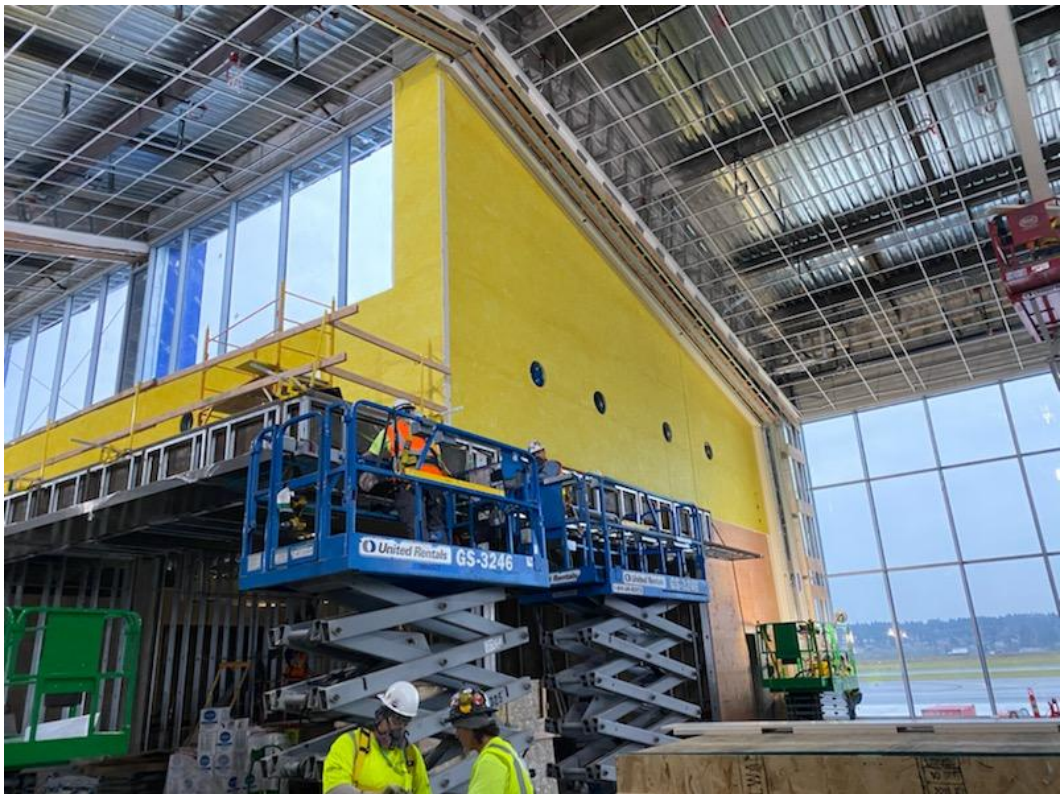
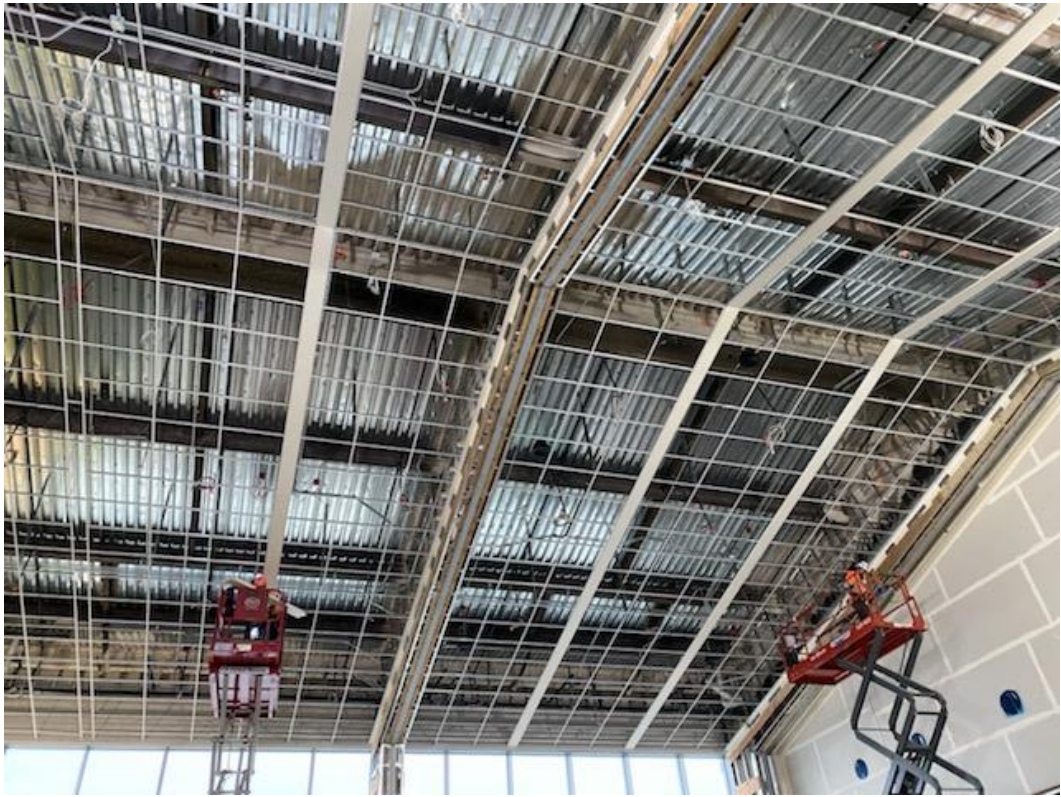




What did it mean to you to be part of this large construction project at PDX?

Professional Lath and Plaster installed sound-absorbing plaster and ceiling tiles to ensure there's not an overwhelming amount of noise when things get busy – creating calm and comfort for travelers. For owner Hartley, though, the opportunity to work on this project was personal.

“I’ll be proud of this project all the days in my life. As a person born and raised in Portland, going to the airport many times throughout my life, I never would have imagined that I would be able to be part of the team to expand the airport. It’s just amazing. It’s like a dream come true,” Hartley shared.







This milestone reinforced to Watkins how much her company had grown since beginning the Mentor Protégé Program. “Working on such a highly publicized project was a measure of how much Green Man has grown over the last 12 years. It was a lovely sense of accomplishment representing graduates of the Mentor Protégé Program, Skanska’s BOOST program, and women-owned businesses. I feel incredible pride seeing the completed concourse knowing my company played a role.”

Do you have a favorite memory from your time working on the project?

“Our favorite part of the project was seeing the colored lights turned on for the first time on the exterior of the building and watching them being programmed,” shared Maurice Rahming with O’Neill Construction Group, referring to the fun element they added while leading the lighting installation. We now have the ability to program the lights on our exterior windows to display a seemingly endless set of color combinations. “The amount of opportunity for programming the lights is endless.”



The exterior lights shine on the brand-new Concourse E

While Hartley doesn’t have a specific memory, he referenced the pride his workers had in completing this project. “Everybody on my crew was honored to be there working. It’s more than just a job. All my workers are so excited about it, are so inspired to put their best foot forward. In all my career, I think this is the best job I’ve ever been a part of.”

Our diversity, equity and inclusion work: *The Port of Portland focuses on addressing historical inequities and leveraging our resources to make the region we love even better. We began formal implementation of an [equity plan](#) in July 2019, which includes goals to increase small business participation; create an equitable, inclusive and welcoming place to work; and engage the community. [Read a progress update on this work.](#)*

