

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Hey everybody. Welcome to Altabanking. We are the podcast that talks about business and economic issues in the state of Utah. I'm your host, Stan Sorensen, and I am joined today by my friend Jennie Tanner, who I'm going to have introduce herself in just a minute. But Jennie and I have had an opportunity to work together in some other environments and had a great time, so I know we're going to have a great conversation today as well. It is Women in Business Month coming up here, and that's one of the things we want to talk with Jennie about. She's got a really interesting background and has done some really cool community things as well. So Jennie, welcome.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Thank you for having me.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself. Tell us a little bit about Tanner Glass.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

All right. Well, again, my name is Jennie Tanner and I own a company called Tanner Glass & Hardware. It is a construction company. I'm considered a trade. We sell mirrors, shower doors, door hardware, and we install everything we sell, which makes us kind of a niche company. And we've been in business for 22 years. It's a family-run business. I took it over from my father when he retired and we have 70 employees. And we do a lot for our community, Tanner Glass does, in giving back to homes that are built for children that have issues coming out of the hospital and they need grab bars and ramps. But we also have very high end customers and production builders and we have really long term relationships with those people as well.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

It's great. So remind me how long the company has been in business.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We've been in business for 22 years. My father owned a company previous to Tanner Glass for 27 years doing similar products, selling similar products. And we started this as a family back in 2000. And my father retired in 2012 and I purchased the company from him and just grew it and took it into a new direction with a picture framing company, commercial glass and glazing division, as well as the hardware and the residential glass.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I remember with the glazing and all and being able to walk around in the workshop and get that whole tour was really... It was cool.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We sell a lot of glass. I think we were one of the largest glass dealers in the state.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

So you took over the business from your father, what, nine years ago, 10 years ago, give or take?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yes.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

10 years ago, I guess it would be, right?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Right. Right.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

2012 to 2022. And as you said, you're considered a trade. You're kind of in a unique position, aren't you, from the standpoint of being a woman running a trade business? Is that correct?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I am very unique in being a trade and running a construction company that supplies and installs to the builder, to the residential builder.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

It is very uncommon and it has been a challenge.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Tell us more about that.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Well, first of all, because it was originally a family-run business with my father and my brother and my husband and we were all involved in the day to day operations and sales, everyone made the assumption that they actually ran the company and I was the secretary. So when I bought the company from my father, I found that people would call and say, "Well, let me talk to your dad." And it took a while for people to understand that the buck stopped with me. And I joke about I have the bat phone. If anybody wants to get ahold of me, they call the bat phone. But I have great employees that they're considered to be the gatekeepers and they allow me now to do things that are important for me. And I work very... I'm very entrenched in community service at this point in my career. But there were a lot of challenges and I don't think that... Because it's a male-dominated industry, I wasn't taken seriously for several years.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

How do you go about... Again, within the construction industry as a woman, what are the things that you do to build your credibility?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Well, doorknobs can be sold by a lot of different sources, and I think customer service is what separates me from my competition. And creating and maintaining and nurturing relationships has helped me maintain a lot of those customer-client relationships. We've had customers from before when it was my dad's company that followed us over when we started Tanner Glass & Hardware, and me nurturing those relationships and taking care of them and making sure they knew that they were a priority for me has helped maintain all those relationships and to just make sure that they know that they're important to me. And so I think that that's one of the most important things that separates me from my competition or from other sources that sell the same products that I do.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Is there a lot of product differentiation or is that an opportunity to do product differentiation as well as... Because obviously the service side differentiates you quite a bit. But is there a lot of product differentiation room in there? Is it a mirror is a mirror is a mirror?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

No. Well, a mirror is a mirror is a mirror unless it has a lot of flaws in it. But a lot of my customers have national contracts, and so I have to sell products to them that they have a national agreement with. I have 14,000 items in my software program and we sell an awful lot of different types of products that look identical. So from Schlage to Kwikset to BHP, they may all look like a brush nickel round knob, but there are little differences and nuances that separate them. And certain builders have those programs where they get rebates back at the end of the year by selling those products.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Got it.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And so I'm forced to stock an awful lot of very, very similar products, and it's very complicated, especially recently with supply chain issues and trying to maintain all of that inventory and bringing in thousands of doorknobs for one customer just so that I have it for them and I don't put myself in a predicament where I have to tell them that we're using a different product or I'm out.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Right. So you mentioned Schlage. I know they've been working really hard on smart technology, smart locks and things like that. Have you found much interest in that from your customers and are you starting to bring in more of that type of product and all as well?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yes. So we sell... Both Kwikset and Schlage have really great products that are wifi and have the new technology that everyone's wanting and the electronic keypads that people put on their locks where they can walk up and open it with their phone or just push a button. Schlage has got a product that you can have 30 codes and give one to your housekeeper and give one to a maintenance person and you can immediately delete it after they're gone. So there's a lot of new technology out there that we have to try to keep up with and educate our customers on and for what's best for them as well.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I had an opportunity a couple of years ago to meet the fellow who runs Schlage's Innovation Lab, so we were talking about some of these products. I remember him sharing a product that has the ability to have multiple codes and you can customize for one particular person and then turn it off when that person is done if contractor or something. But it just seems like it's moving really, really fast.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

It is, and a lot of the products become obsolete after even a year or two because of the new technology. One of the problems we're facing, though, is all of those electronic deadbolts take chips.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I was going to ask.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And so we are now facing 30 week lead times on a lot of those products. So that has become challenging in addition to so many other products that we're having issues with.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Where are you finding the greatest supply chain bottlenecks? Which types of products?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

That's probably our worst right now, is that electronic deadbolt. Anything that's going to take a chip. Schlage has the Encode and I think they're well over 30 weeks. KWikset has a smart key where you can actually go in and change your lock yourself. You can insert a key and re-key your own house, and that's taken off and very proprietary. They've got a patent that they'll never let go on that. But it's very popular and a lot of different builders use it, especially for apartment complexes. Then they don't have to have that maintenance person that has a big keying box that they have to go in and change and re-key all the individual apartments.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So that's been a very popular product to use in apartments.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

But again, getting squeezed with that...

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Absolutely.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Long wait times.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And one of the problems that we face is that because, going back to my customer service and making sure I take care of my customers, if any product is back ordered and we are faced with using an alternate product or having to just wait for that product to get in, you find yourself going back to a house and having to make notes and keep files. You think you're done with something and you can wipe your hands and move on. But with products being back ordered for so long and they may be sitting in Long Beach, but I'm not going to see them for another three to four months, we really do struggle having to go back to homes when people are lived in and calling and making appointments. It's just very costly. So the supply chain has affected so many of the trades, not just in pricing and back orders, but just trying to get things taken care of for the people that actually now have lived in those homes for a while.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

As you're saying that, I'm thinking about a story that one of our other customers shared with us that you've got some of these home builders that can't get appliances. They can't get refrigerators, for example, and so they might have built custom cabinetry for a refrigerator of particular dimensions, that refrigerator's back ordered for six months, so they go and they get just a regular sort off-the-floor from Home Depot or somewhere refrigerator. They stick it in so that the family can move in and live there and then when the custom unit arrives, they go and they swap it out. Sounds like you're doing the same thing.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yes. And builders have to be very creative. I experienced this personally when we built a home in Mesquite last year and our stove was on back order for a few months. And it was right before Thanksgiving and they took a... And you have to have a stove for inspection and to give you your C of O.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Sure.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So they took a stove out of a model home and gave it to us for a couple of months until ours came in. So builders are finding themselves having to be really creative and putting things in and buying appliances. And then you don't get to return those, so stockpiling those and maybe putting them in a model that they build or... But really, creative thought is really at work right now with all of us.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

That's just a fascinating problem to me because you just don't think about it if you're not in the business.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I didn't think about it until we started having the supply chains. There's always been back order issues with a product here and there, but not so many products at one time.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Closet rods, the supports that go, the house numbers. So many issues at once have really... And fortunately it hasn't crippled us because I have been proactive, and with the help of Alta Bank and lines of credit, I've been able to overstock in a lot of my products to guarantee that my customers do have what they need. So it's been very helpful for me to have that line of credit and to be able to purchase, and that's what they're for, is to help with capital. And we had to build a mezzanine because we had so much product and I had to buy two containers to put all of the overstock product in just to make sure that my customers had what they needed.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

So as you're saying that, I was thinking back to a conversation that we had previously on this podcast with Jake Boyer from Boyer Company, and Jake says internally they talk about building beds and sheds, so building multifamily housing units and they're building warehouses. And a part of that reason is because that demand is increased in some ways because people are needing to bring in more inventory.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Right.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

And so your solution then was to, I mean, obviously get the storage units you talked about, but you built a mezzanine.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We had to build a mezzanine. We have \$1.2 million worth of doorknobs in my... And at \$10 a doorknob. We have that much in inventory just to make sure that we take care of our customers' needs, and so it was critical that we had to build that and then buy a container and then find that we needed another container. And containers are a hot commodity as well.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I bet. And as you're doing that, you're also having to think about it isn't just 1.2 million doorknobs of a type, right? I mean, you've got to have, as you were saying earlier, you've got to have the different brands and the different styles, and that inventory preparation and inventory management piece, I'm going to assume that's just really sort forced you to rethink how that entire piece of the business runs right now.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

One of my builders came to give me a Christmas present last year and he shook his head and said, "Jennie, I don't know how you've done it for this long." He said, "It would make me insane trying to keep track of spring door stops and strike plates and house numbers and 27 different types of bath hardware

and toilet paper holders and all the different door hardware and levers and finishes that you carry and stock," black, brush nickel, satin brass, polished chrome, oil rubbed bronze, in every different shape of knob and every different style of lever. And then the same with the bath hardware. And it does take a really good accounting system to keep that going and to make sure that we don't run out. And we do. We do run out.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Sure.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We also can't gauge when our builders... They're not great at communicating when they're going to ramp up and all of a sudden I have 100 houses in one week for one builder. And so going through that, all of that inventory so quickly, we have to place orders. We turn our inventory probably two to three times a month.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Wow. That I would not have expected.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

It's a lot.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I guess it makes sense when you consider the amount of building as well that's going on in the state. But that still seems like a lot.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And I'm lucky enough that I have a lot of the larger builders in the Wasatch Front, and they do a really large business, and so I... It's important for me that I have what I need for them.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Are you finding that the builders' clients are putting in custom orders or trying to put in custom orders for things as well? Or are the builders really kind of keeping them geared towards you're going to need to take off the shelf pieces?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Both.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Okay.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So with our clientele in the Park City, Deer Valley area, obviously they're going to buy whatever they want to buy, and we make sure to place those orders well in advance, even if that product has to sit in our warehouse for a couple of months. It's important that we have all of it so that when it comes time to

installing. We do have some production builders that don't give very many choices and so it's easy for us to know that we've got two different choices, so when we get that purchase order, we have what we need. But there are some other builders that have allowed their home buyers... And it's really frustrating and difficult for us when they'll allow them to go onto a website or give them three or four different websites and say, "Okay, go on and pick out whatever you want," and those people haven't seen the product in person, and so they don't really know if it's a great-looking product or if the finish is what they really want it to be.

And I have seen some purchase orders where I've questioned thinking, "They're not going to like this," but we order it in anyway and we install it and we haven't received any complaints. But builders do try to help their home buyers navigate and builders are really good about keeping people within their budget, especially right now with interest rates going up and housing slowing down a tad. People are trying to really do a good job of streamlining "This is what you get." But I have known and experienced in the last 22 years of running this company that home buyers in Utah want what they want and they think that it should just be included as a base product, getting granite or quartz and having it be at a laminate price. So it's been a challenge to keep people in their lane and make sure that they understand what they can afford and what they qualify for and making sure that they don't go around that.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

That's got to be a challenge. And then remind me the overall footprint. I mean, I know you're building in Salt Lake Valley, Utah Valley. How far North? How far South?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We go down to St. George and go up to Logan. I actually help a builder in Victor, Idaho, and we'll be in Rexburg, Idaho with them as well. We've built in Wyoming and Nevada. We're doing a commercial job in Colorado right now. But it doesn't make sense for... Those are special customers and they're also jobs that have been contracted with long term builders.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I was going to ask.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So it doesn't make sense for me to go up and do a residential house in Colorado when there is competition there that can take care of that, because the travel, it just doesn't make sense, especially with the pricing of gas right now.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Right. Right. So those long term relationships where they're able to bring you in to do those special projects and things, that's got to be a nice kind of benefit just to sort of add a little bit.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Ye,. And some of my employees enjoying travel, they'll go up and spend a couple of days and get the work done and it just gives them a break too. But at the end of the day, it has to make sense financially for both the builder and for us to go, and I have to job cost quite a bit to make sure that they understand that by the time I get a hotel and by the time I'm paying them overtime to drive down there and the cost of the fuel, it may not make sense. And I'm very honest with my customers about that. I don't want to



lose that business to someone else, but I also want to make sure that they're getting what they need and are able to be competitive in the market that they're in.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

And I think that's a good... that's just a good practice and good discipline. Look, this is your trade off. I'd love to keep this business, but this is what it's going to cost you, and if it's worth it, great. Go do it. I mean, I think that's really excellent.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And I think that that honesty with my customers lets them know that I care about them and I care about their business and that we can have those honest conversations, and it keeps them more loyal to me because they know that I am looking out for their best interest. And so they may use someone else in a different region, but they stay committed to me in the territory that I serve.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I think that's awesome. Are you starting to see any slowdown at all?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So we're one of the last trades in a house, and we are not. We are four to six weeks out on shower glass and mirrors right now still. We were six to eight, so I guess you could say yes, there's a slowdown. We've gone from six to eight weeks to four six weeks.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Okay.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We've seen a little bit of a slowdown in hardware, and what that means is that we are keeping up with schedules and we're no longer two to three weeks out on hardware. I have more installers in my hardware department than I do in my shower glass department, and so I can get more work done. And so I guess the answer is yes, I know it's coming for us, but I don't think it's going to hit us until probably December or January. And what my sales representatives have told me is that they saw this two or three week lag when interest rates initially went up three quarters.

And I've heard from my builders that there was no traffic in any of their sales models for a couple of weeks, but my sales reps are telling me that it was very short lived and that people are just moving on and accepting what it is. I think anyone that struggled qualifying for a 2% loan is obviously not going to qualify for a 7% loan, but there are so many people that are moving in from outside of the state that have cash and are buying homes with cash and it doesn't affect them.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I had an interesting conversation with one of our mortgage officers because the conforming loan limit is going to go up like it does every year. It's going to go up we think about 10%. And I said, "Well, so how has that changed the behavior?" She kind of said the same thing. She said, "Well, you're going to have some behaviors that don't really change because we've got this influx of folks that come in from places where housing is a lot more expensive and they're selling their home and able to buy more home here,"

or people that can afford to have a second home or whatever. So you're seeing the same behaviors as well.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Right.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

People with cash are still... I talked to a builder yesterday and he said that... He's a builder in Park City and had a home that was one point... He wasn't going to go lower than 1.3 and they forced the home buyer that was interested in the home to show them their bank statement and he said they had \$2,000,000 in the bank in their checking account, and these people were haggling over at 1.2 versus the 1.3. And he said, "After I saw that they had \$2,000,000, I was not budging. I knew that they could afford this. It wasn't a transfer of funds from another account. It was just sitting there."

And so there are a lot of people that are still in that financial situation that can afford to pay cash for homes and they're doing it, and I think that that building will still happen. Those types of homes up in Park City, those are still going to continue on. The only thing I think that would stop it is if there were a really deep recession where people's 401ks and the stock market went down to the point where they just didn't want to take any money out because they would really hit, the loss would be significant.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

And we're probably seeing the same sort of thing in Washington County as well, where you get more...

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Home prices in Washington County are a lot more expensive and it's a really strange region. I was going to open a store down in St. George because I was following a builder to do work and I couldn't find any employees that wanted to work more than four days a week. And they don't care about benefits. They only cared about the wage and they care about having free time, and so it was really difficult for me to try to find full-time people that wanted to come to work Monday through Friday, eight to five. And I actually changed my mind and decided not to open a store down there.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

You're not finding that same issue, though, up here in your main shop, right?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

No. We're very well staffed. I mean, I can always use more employees and I'd really love to have about 10 more shower door installers, but we're very well staffed and I have really great people that have been with me for years. I have a very long tenure. One employee came with us from my father's previous company 22 years ago and he's still...

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I think I met him, didn't I?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yeah.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

When we were...

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And he's still with us. And I'd say that our average tenure is 10 plus years. If you last six months with me, you usually stay a lifetime.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Okay. That says one of two things. We won't get into that, but no. And I love that tenure. I think that's really valuable. And I know, again, I know from being on site and just kind of watching the environment like we did that day, it was that people get along. It does seem sort very collegial if not family-like atmosphere in a lot of ways. The need to... Wanting to hire 10 more shower door installers, I mean, is it they're just not there or the competition is just that strong for them?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

That job is a very physical labor-intensive job. We install glass panels that are seven feet by 10 feet and weigh hundreds of pounds, and it takes its toll on your body after a while and your shoulders start to break down and your knees start to break down. So you can only do that job for a while. You can only... Maybe 20 years and then you really just... Your body needs you to do something different. And if you want to continue your golf swing, then you do have to find a different job. And it's not something that when you immediately get out of school or college or whatever. It's still a learned trade and there really isn't any kind of an education program in the state that teaches you how to be a glazer. You have to learn it on the job.

And so we understand that and we try to... It's always easier to have a friend of a friend, "My buddy is looking for a job," and hire that buddy and train them on how to be a glazer. But it takes about a year for them to understand. And STEM is a really important aspect of what we do. You use tape measures every day. You measure, you cut, and you need to learn... You need to know how to read a tape measure and fractions. And so we find that it sometimes is difficult and somebody pulls out a tape measure and they have no idea what three-sixteenths means versus eight or a 16th. So it's definitely a learning process, and we know that when we hire someone, they typically are not experienced and we have to train them.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Let's shift gears for a second because there's sort of a nice segue with respect to educating people, getting them more familiar with the various roles that are in the construction industry. We talked earlier about being in the unique position of being a woman in that industry and we've talked about your community service commitment, and you're involved in an organization that brings those three things together with The House That SHE Built.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Correct.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yes.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

So tell us more about that program. Just tell us more about that program.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

So I am president of the Professional Women in Building for the State of Utah, and the acronym is PWB. There are PWB charters around the country that are chartered through the National Association of Home Builders. And we started a project back in 2019, had an idea that we wanted to build the first home in the nation built by all women. We knew that that would be a very difficult ask, but we got together, we designed a home, we purchased a lot from Oakwood Homes at a discount, and we had female general contractors working on the home. And we built this home and we sold it to a family and we made a significant profit on it, and that profit is now going to a scholarship, to give scholarships to help young women get into the construction industry, specifically trades.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

And that, I wanted to focus on that because number one, there's a shortage of tradespeople...

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Anyway.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Regardless, right? And is it fair to say that there are a lot of young women who maybe they don't know the opportunities that exist or they're kind of maybe put off with those opportunities because that stereotype that it's guys work or men's work?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Absolutely.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

First of all, everyone assumes that construction is extremely labor inhibited to a woman. I do have a female hardware installer, and she hasn't worked for us for very long and I was really excited to have a woman apply. But one of the things that I've learned through the process of building The House That SHE Built is that parents don't sit down at the dinner table with their young daughters and say, "Hey, honey, why don't you consider being an electrician or a plumber or working in HVAC?"

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

The idea is that they're going to a four year college, or if they're not, maybe you can go into the dental industry. Maybe you can be a nurse. And they don't really talk about construction for women. So we consider that to be our job, educating young women that there is a place for them and showing them what we do in construction and that we're out there with tool belts on. I've installed plenty of doorknobs and I've installed shower doors and I know how to key locks and it isn't that labor intensive. And it can work for any woman that has that interest. Not every young woman wants to go to college. In fact, that's my daughter.

My older daughter went to college and graduated from the University of Utah this last May, but my younger daughter has ADHD and she doesn't want to go to college. Homework was an absolute nightmare for her through high school and the thought of going to college is not appealing to her. And so I think it would be very hypocritical of me to force her to go to any kind of schooling, two year associate or a four year college. And so she is very interested in looking at coming to work for me and maybe taking over my business in the future. And the PWB is working very hard to educate young women in the fact that there's a place for them in construction and getting the word out that we are giving out scholarships.

Our application is in Spanish as well as English and it's on our website, UtahPWB.com. And we want to give out as many scholarships as we can. There are thousand dollars scholarships that will pay for your education. It will pay for your tools. And we do a lot of community service projects too and try to bring those young women in to help volunteer. The home ended up... We did have men working on some aspects of the home. They helped us and told us what to do when we couldn't find women that were framers or we brought drywallers in from Bozeman, Montana, and they're called the Drywall Chicks.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Cool.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

We brought women in from all over the country to work on the house because there are only 3% of women in the state of Utah that actually work in construction in the field.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Really?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Yes. And 11% nationally that work in construction. And that includes administrative and real estate too. So there's a very low percentage of women that work in construction and I really think it has to do with parents not talking to their daughters about those opportunities and school counselors. You go walk into your school counselor's office and they have this list of things that, "What do you want to do?" And construction typically is not on that for a young woman.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yeah, which, boy, I could go on and on. So very first thing I'll say is I think that I completely agree that the under-representation in the trades, just in general, if you just take gender out of it, is because we

have this idea that if you don't go to college, you're not going to be successful, which I fundamentally disagree with.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I'm proof.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

But even beyond that, I mean, yes, but there are folks that just don't... They just don't want to. You talked about your younger daughter, My youngest son for the longest time would say, "I hope it's all right. I don't think I want to go to college." And the very first thing we said is "Then you need to go look at some trades" because there is always going to be an employment opportunity there, if you're a plumber or you're an electrician or in any heavy equipment operator. It doesn't matter.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Right.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Right? So maybe we were the exception as a family, just like you're an exception with your daughter. But how do you think we turn that around? How do you think that we get parents and just school counselors and anybody else that's talking with kids to say, "Here's this whole other set of things you can do over here and look at that and see if it's interesting."

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

There are CTE, not classes, but CTE school fairs that a lot of different contractors come in, they have booths, they talk to the kids at these job fairs, and they're in the high schools. And I think that's probably the best way to educate a young person that, look, you don't have to go to college to be a successful business person. And whether or not you want to drive down the lane of becoming the business owner of your trade or just working in that trade and being a plumber that just goes to work every day and goes home and being very satisfied with that career, you still can make a really good living doing that. I mean, a business owner has to be very disciplined and has to understand their financials and job costing and employment practices where becoming a plumber or working in HVAC, you get to get up and go watch something be built that you had your hands on and be very proud at the end of the day that, "Wow, I built this and somebody lives in it and it's because of what I did."

I think having those conversations with the schools and with parents and educating them on what a trade actually is in 2022 versus what a trade probably was back in the 1980s, it's a completely different business now, and people make a lot of money. They can. They have the ability to make a lot of money and to be very successful in construction. And I feel like having those conversations is important for me as a woman in business and educating people. I use my social media pages to educate and to share what's happening and what the PWB is doing. We do a lot of community service, and I feel like that gives me what I need out of life now, but I want to bring other young women into it and have them see who you're helping and the difference you can make in someone's life by working on a project. We've done a lot with some domestic violence charities, some projects that people have lived in that really need some love and updating and renovation, and it's very rewarding and it's a really great thing for me to do now in my life.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

And I really admire it and respect it as well. And you actually just touched on something that I think is also probably important as we talk about trades where a lot of what we're talking about is sort of new construction, home building and all, but if you're an electrician or a plumber or HVAC or a hardware installer, any of these trades that go into building a new home, that's also, in a way, it's a little bit recession proof in that if new home building slows down, you have all these existing buildings that are still going to need care and upkeep, right?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Absolutely. One of the things that helped us get through the recession were remodels and people not wanting to move and move into a new home, but finishing a basement or perhaps just remodeling a kitchen or bathrooms and just updating and refreshing their existing home. And that really helped us through the recession. And hopefully we're not going to experience that with this next really...

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Knock on wood, right?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

Very light recession that we're going to have, but which I still don't understand what that looks like.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I sort of think about it as binary. You're either in it or you're not. But maybe that's just me.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I think a year from now we're going to say, "Oh, we were already in it and we didn't even know it, and now it's over."

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

I've read that opinion a couple times. The other piece of it too, just for anybody that might be thinking about or has a daughter or son, but really in this context, a daughter who might be thinking about, for example, becoming a plumber, just understand that the more plumbing projects I take out my house, the more you're guaranteed to work because I'm going to screw something up. But anyway, just a pitch there. So as you're talking with these young women and you're granting the scholarships and all, are you finding that they tend to gravitate towards a particular trade or two or three, or does it really run the full gamut of positions that are out there?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

If I really gave it some serious thought, I would think that perhaps finished trim is one thing that women have a tendency to gravitate towards because it's not labor intensive and they get to measure and cut and use power saws and drills, and woodworking is... When we were... The House That SHE Built was in the Utah Valley Parade of Homes last year in 2021, and we had thousands of people that came through it just through the pure advertising of it and people wanting to see if we built a really good, nice, stable home. And we had a young woman come through that was down at Utah Valley, UVU, and she said something that resonated to me that was infuriating, and she said that she took some woodworking classes and that she loves woodworking, she loves building things with wood, and she said, "But I keep getting told that it's a hobby and I need to find a real job."

And that's just not true. First of all, even if you didn't want to go into the construction industry with your skill, Etsy and Shopify, there are so many different sites now that people are actually making those things a business. And metal fabrication is another one that people are actually making it a legitimate money-making business. And so the thought of someone saying that woodworking is just a hobby is a really unfair statement. Seamstresses make a living making clothing for the runway or for stores or for whatever, and sewing clothes doesn't have to be a hobby. So taking that on the construction side, it seems a little bit unfair to me that people don't take that seriously and they're maybe putting these young women into a box and saying, "Oh no, that's just a hobby. You just need to get a real job." And that is a real job.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

It is disheartening to hear that and it's very much a real job. And I'd go as far as to say that it's as much artistry as any of the other arts types of things that you think about where people will say, "Oh, well, you're a professional photographer" or "You're a professional painter." Well, I mean, you're still, as woodwork, you're still creating.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

You are.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Right?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And you're a professional. You are skilled.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Absolutely.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

And this is what you do and this is how you make money and this is a craft for you.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Yes. Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely. I would love to... I'd love to be able to crack the code in just sort getting the stigma, if you will, that I think has sort of developed over a number of years that these are not professions for smart people. I hate that. I've heard that one before and I absolutely hate it, and/or for women. I mean, if we could crack that code, I think we'd be a lot better off.

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I agree. And I feel like, again, I think it's just about having those conversations and communication and letting these young women know that there's a real opportunity for them to be successful in what they love instead of being boxed in and forced to do something that they just sort fell into. I tell everyone that doorknobs are functional jewelry, and I do really feel like that. I was a flight attendant for Delta Airlines and I lived in Atlanta, and I never thought for one minute that construction would be my passion. And I did fall into it because it was my father's business, which so many women that do work in



construction, that's how they get into it is because their father owned a construction company or they were a general contractor or whatever.

But that is how a lot of the women do get into this business. And I started out as a sales rep. And then when we started Tanner Glass, I handled some administrative things, but I also started making a lot of advances in making sure we had enough inventory and going out and installing when we didn't have the labor force to help us. And I learned that I really do love this business. When we built The House That SHE Built, like I mentioned earlier, I love stepping back at that finished home and knowing that I was a part of it and there is a young family with young children that live in that house now. And it is their home. And when I first started... I sell doorknobs, so I don't know a lot of the different aspects of building.

And when we were tying rebar, I didn't even know why you tied rebar. I didn't know anything about the footings and foundation and what the rebar did, why. But I learned all of that through building this home and came out of it with so much admiration and respect for all of the people that work in the different trades and how you do understand the component that goes into it and how important it is to get it right and to take pride in the work that you do.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

The thing you just mentioned about being able to step back and say, "I did that," I mean, I can think of very few things that are as rewarding as being able to look at finished product, irrespective of what finished product is, and to be able to say, even if you're the one that poured the foundation, even being able to step back and look at the finished product, you don't see the foundation, but be able to say, "I enabled that because I did this piece over here."

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

It's very rewarding.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

Awesome. Jennie, is there anything else? Anything else that you want to add? Anything else that we should know or parting messages or thoughts?

**Guest: Jennie Tanner**

I'm not sure. I guess what I would say is that construction is a thriving industry and it touches every other industry. If homes aren't built and people can't move into them, it affects landscapers. It affects furniture companies, furniture sales companies. It affects appliance sales companies. And I think making affordable housing a priority for us in the state of Utah is critical. I know that a \$500,000 home today was a \$200,000 home 10 or 15 years ago. And I'm not sure where we're going, but we need to work really hard in our state to make affordable housing attainable for the Gen Y generation and for everyone else. There are people that have saved for years and years and years and still can't qualify. And everyone deserves to live in a home and to be able to call it their own. And I just love the fact that I get to work in this industry and be a part of building our state.

**Host: Stan Sorensen**

That's great. Jennie Tanner, thank you very much for spending time with us today and I really appreciate it and, of course, look forward to continuing this conversation as we work together. And I want to thank all of you for listening as well to Altabanking and remind you that you can subscribe to this podcast via

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