



# Illinois Department of Transportation Diversity Matters! February 2013

## Upcoming Events February 12th

Getting Paid:

Documentation, Certified Payroll & Force Accounts Workshop

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
DBE Resource Center  
900 South Des Plaines Street  
Chicago, IL

Contact:  
Brenda Gold  
[Brenda.Gold@illinois.gov](mailto:Brenda.Gold@illinois.gov)

## February 19th

Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward 2013 DBE Conference (Day 1)

9:30 AM - 8:00 PM  
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center  
701 East Adams Street  
Springfield, IL

Contact:  
Dana Goodrum  
[Dana.Goodrum@illinois.gov](mailto:Dana.Goodrum@illinois.gov)

## February 20th

Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward 2013 DBE Conference (Day 2)

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM  
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center  
701 East Adams Street  
Springfield, IL

Contact:  
Dana Goodrum  
[Dana.Goodrum@illinois.gov](mailto:Dana.Goodrum@illinois.gov)

For a complete list of events, visit [http://www.diversity.dot.illinois.gov/event\\_calendar.aspx](http://www.diversity.dot.illinois.gov/event_calendar.aspx)

### IDOT Spotlight: Omer Osman, Director, Division of Highways

On January 1, 2013, Omer Osman was appointed as the Director of the Division of Highways (DOH)/Chief Engineer for the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

In his new role, Director Osman is responsible for administering, planning, supervising and controlling all five regions and nine districts within DOH.

Prior to his appointment, Director Osman held other high-level positions within the department. He has served as the deputy director of highways/region five engineer, project implementation engineer, operations engineer and the district construction engineer along with several mid-level positions at various bureaus within district four in Peoria.

As an experienced transportation official, Director Osman puts emphasis on strengthening human capital of IDOT in order to meet the agency's vision, transforming transportation for tomorrow. "A new vision for transportation is necessary. This is not the 1960s anymore.

We have to continuously build and improve our transportation infrastructures and utilize new technologies to get jobs done," says Director Osman. "In order to compete in a fast global economy, we have to invest strategically. An innovative and active transportation system is a catalyst to economic growth and global competitiveness," adds Director Osman.

Director Osman born and raised in Sudan, Africa earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering from Southern University-Baton Rouge, LA and M.S. in Civil Engineering from Bradley University, Peoria.

Director Osman, a graduate of two IDOT training programs, Professional Advancement of Career Engineers (PACE) and Executive Leadership Series (ELDS), also recognizes the importance of on the job training to retain high quality people. "Strengthening human capital and filling appropriate vacancies is critical to the success and sustainability of an agency," said Osman.

According to Director Osman, it is crucial that as a Department, we not only

look at building safe and sustainable roads and bridges, but also explore various travel options to move people and goods from one place to another in the most cost-effective manner.

"When multi-modal transportation systems are efficient, they provide economic and social opportunities and benefits that result in better accessibility to markets, employment and additional investments. We are leading the way and we cannot stop here, we need a massive infusion of funds to revive our transportation infrastructures," he adds.

Director Osman recognizes the abundance of opportunities for young people in Civil Engineering, however he emphasizes that it is up to the individual to shape their dreams into reality.

"With hard work and dedication, you can achieve anything no matter what part of the globe you're from. We have to be able to sustain ourselves first by doing a better job and the rest will follow."

### February Target Market Letting Announced; January Letting Update

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is preparing for the Target Market letting, which is scheduled for February 15, 2013 at the District eight office in Collinsville. There are seven projects programmed for \$1.2 million for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise firms. For more information, visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/desenv/021513/021513letg.html>.

IDOT held the January letting on January 18, 2013. With \$137.5 million and 131 road construction projects let, the 2013 construction season is shaping up to be another busy one. For more information, visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/desenv/delett.html>.

### IDOT Announces Current Procurement Opportunities

The Illinois Department of Transportation announces current procurement opportunities open for bid. To find a full list of opportunities, potential vendors can visit the Illinois Procurement Bulletin at [www.purchase.state.il.us](http://www.purchase.state.il.us).

## Consultant Firms Selected to Help IDOT Advance High-Speed Rail Project

Three consultant firms were recently selected to complete Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and advance the high-speed rail project from Chicago to St. Louis. Hanson Professional Services was selected to complete the environmental study for the Springfield Flyover component. Parsons Transportation Group was selected to complete the environmental study for the

Chicago to Joliet corridor segment and Michael Baker Jr. and STV Inc. were selected for the Alton to St. Louis corridor segment.

Each firm is required to meet or exceed a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal for subcontractors working on the projects. The DBE goal for the Springfield Flyover is 25 percent, Chicago to Joliet is 30 percent and Alton to St. Louis is 20 percent.

## IDOT's Engineering Explorers Making a Positive Impact

Through field trips, group activities, and special guest speakers, IDOT's Engineering Explorers Post 6 are introduced to various aspects of engineering. In its ninth year of helping students explore a career in the field of engineering, the post has grown from 23 to almost 70 explorers.

The Engineering Explorer Post provides students practical "hands on" experience in the engineering field and gives them an opportunity to spend time with professionals and be mentored by them. The explorers program is comprised of young men and women from diverse

backgrounds between the ages of 14 to 20. The main objective is to encourage young high school and college students to pursue a career in engineering, but also help answer questions about admission requirements, specialty programs and scholarship opportunities to put them on the path to success.

Lee Ann Prather, who works for IDOT's Bureau of Safety Engineering, has been involved in the Engineering Explorer's Post for many years and sees the program as a great benefit to the community.

The Post meets once a month and is self sufficient through

The total cost for the three environmental studies is \$47 million.

To follow progress, updates and completed improvements along the signature Chicago-St. Louis high-speed rail corridor, please visit [www.idothsr.org](http://www.idothsr.org). For the latest Amtrak schedules, fares and more information, visit [www.Amtrak.com](http://www.Amtrak.com) or call 800-USA-RAIL.

member dues, fund raisers and donations. Last year, the Post was able to raise enough to offer two \$500 scholarships to its members.

Currently, the Post is comprised of IDOT volunteers, mainly engineers and technicians, but other employees within the department are encouraged to get involved and make an impact in the lives of young explorers through programs like this one. With the continued support, volunteers hope to continue to create an engaging educational experience for young high school and college students in the community interested in the field of engineering.

## Historical Tidbits: Minorities in Transportation

As the Illinois Department of Transportation observes Black History Month, we take this opportunity to highlight a few of the many African-American individuals who have made great contributions to the transportation industry.

Fredrick M. Jones' (1892-1961) air conditioning system completely changed the way we transport goods via trucks and freight trains, allowing

them to travel longer and farther.

Garrett A. Morgan (1875-1963) designed the Automatic Traffic Signal, a precursor to today's traffic light. Morgan's contribution paved the way for the traffic signals we rely on to travel safely each day.

On June 15, 1921, Bessie Coleman became the first African-American woman in

the world to obtain a pilot's license. Once she obtained her license, she made a commitment to teach other black women to fly, gave lectures and performed at flying exhibitions.

M.A. Cherry invented what he called a Velocipede, it was made up of two or three wheels held together by a metal frame, an ancestor to what we now call the bicycle.

## Mississippi River Bridge Project Snapshot

One of the goals of the Mississippi River Bridge (MRB) project is to create a diverse job site contractor workforce. For the week of January 20-26 2013, there was an overall workforce of 18.5% minorities and 6.2% female on the MRB project. For more information, please visit <http://www.newriverbridge.org/>.

## DBE Spotlight

EJM Engineering, Inc. was founded in 1986 by Elizabeth J. McLean. At the time, she was considered a Trail Blazer when she started the company because of the limited number of engineering firms owned by women in the mid 1980's in Illinois. McLean built a sound business that primarily serves public sector clients and specializes in electrical engineering, traffic engineering, program management and construction inspection.

After nearly 20 years of running a successful company, McLean passed away in 2003, and the torch was passed to current President Joan Berry in 2004.

Berry understood the importance of meeting client needs and how that idea translates into company growth. It is important to "know your client" and focus on giving your client the absolute best," said Berry. With strategic expansion and consistent leadership, EJM successfully added work categories and increased the pool of work they could compete for.

Berry also knew that in order to meet the needs of the clients, she needed to expand the business. One of her first moves as owner was becoming Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certified in 2004. Then she focused on manpower. She expanded EJM's employee base from 18 in 2006 to 45 in 2012, which led to even more opportunities. In 2006, the firm was selected as a Prime Consultant for the Chicago Department of Transportation. In 2010, they began their first Prime work with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Illinois Tollway, and became the Prime Consultant on IDOT Phase I, II and III projects. EJM's most recent IDOT Prime Consultant work came in 2012 on IDOT Phase I projects that included structural engineering.

Berry has learned that the path to prosperity is in client satisfaction. Berry believes with the help of DBE opportunities, EJM will continue to be a thriving and growing business.

For more information on EJM, Inc please visit [www.ejngineering.com/home/index.html](http://www.ejngineering.com/home/index.html).