



Illinois Department of Transportation Diversity Matters!

March 2013

Upcoming Events

March 14th

Bonding & Financing
Workshop

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

EIGERlab

605 Fulton Avenue
Rockford, IL

Contact:

Kayla McCoy

Kayla.McCoy@illinois.gov

March 20th

Erosion Control
Workshop

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

EIGERlab

605 Fulton Avenue
Rockford, IL

Contact:

Kayla McCoy

Kayla.McCoy@illinois.gov

March 27th

District 1 Open House
Workshop

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

DBE Resource Center

900 South Des Plaines
Street

Chicago, IL

Contact:

Brenda Gold

Dot.di.resourcectr@illinois.gov

For a complete list of events, visit http://www.diversity.dot.illinois.gov/event_calendar.aspx

Drive To Boost Contracts For Minority & Women-Owned Businesses Successful

As part of Governor Pat Quinn's efforts to expand opportunities for minority contractors, on March 4, Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider hosted a major initiative to boost participation of minority- and women-owned firms in state contracts.

"In the past four years we have made great progress in creating more work for minority and women-owned businesses," Governor Quinn said. "But as I mentioned in my State of the State speech, we're going to do more. We're working to ensure a level playing field for all contractors in Illinois, which will increase our state's global competitiveness and put even more people to work."

The kick-off for the new initia-

tive took place at the Winning with the State Business Forum at the Illinois Institute of Technology. There were approximately 200 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) represented at the event. Representatives from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Illinois Tollway, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other key state agencies conducted workshops to quickly provide crucial information for small businesses, and a step-by-step guide to the state's contracting process, including ways of building capacity through alliances.

"We are expanding our efforts to reach out and provide detailed technical assistance to disadvantaged business enterprise firms, and to other

minority and woman-owned firms that could qualify for the DBE program, and help these small businesses more readily qualify for and successfully bid on state contracts," Secretary Schneider said. "The outreach and assistance is critical to firms that have the skills and capabilities to do the work, but may be encountering barriers within the contracting process itself."

The kick-off event is the first of several diversity activities throughout the year to engage the community, provide resources and contract and procurement assistance. IDOT's DBE program is designed to bring greater opportunity to small minority-owned and women-owned companies.

IDOT Hosts USDOT Bonding Education Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Office and Business Workforce Diversity (OBWD) boasts another successful Bonding Education Program (BEP). BEP is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Small Business Transportation Resource Center and the Surety and Fidelity Association of America.

"Becoming bondable is a challenge for many

disadvantaged businesses and these collaborations aim to help businesses grow by obtaining or building bonding capacity," said IDOT's OBWD Director Frank McNeil.

The program consists of comprehensive all-inclusive workshops that address what businesses need to become bond-ready, and offer one-on-one sessions with local surety bonding professionals to help in assembling the materials necessary for a complete bond application. This program is tailored to businesses

competing for transportation-related contracts.

"We are very excited to be able to bring the BEP to Chicago. IDOT has been a great supporter of this program, and we know small businesses benefit when we collaborate on efforts such as the BEP," said Director Brandon Neal, US DOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

For more information, contact IDOT's OBWB at 312.793.2966 or visit <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/Regional/greatlakes.cfm>.

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.

IDOT Accepts Agency of the Year Award

In February 2013, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) was awarded "Agency of the Year" for the agency's support in the training and hiring of high-school students with disabilities in the Sangamon County area.

Deputy Secretary of Transportation Andre B. Ashmore accepted the award on behalf of the department.

"Under the leadership of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider, IDOT has been able to promote, support, recognize and invest in the importance of having a culturally diverse staff," said Deputy Secretary Ashmore. "Additionally, we will continue

to create opportunities that empower people with disabilities to reach, grow and achieve their full potential. The award is an example of the department's ongoing commitment to advocate for people with disabilities."

The Student Professionals With Disabilities (SPWD) began in 2004, and is the first of its type. The program is a partnership between IDOT, Springfield School District 186, the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, United Cerebral Palsy/Land of Lincoln, and Springfield Association for Retarded Citizens. The program focuses on training disabled young student professionals in

office/clerical skills, as it teaches social and life skills necessary to achieve their goals. To date, 30 students are enrolled in the program.

The program, housed in IDOT's Central Office in Springfield, is in its 9th year. In an interview, David Dailey, Bureau of Civil Rights Employee and SPWD Coordinator said "I am very proud to work at an agency that does its best to provide opportunities for citizens of our state, who confront issues as pervasive as these." He added, "IDOT continues to work and provide training, job opportunities and placements with students with disabilities in/outside of IDOT."

TCTR Event Attracts Historic Number of Attendees

The Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Reward (TCTR) conference, hosted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), was regarded a great success with more than 350 attendees this year.

The two-day event was held at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center in Springfield to provide educational and skill building workshops, networking opportunities and information on how to get Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) more work on IDOT-related projects.

"This event was an excellent opportunity for DBEs to share ideas and build relationships that last far beyond the conference," said Illinois Transportation

Secretary Ann L. Schneider. "We want to encourage attendees to take full advantage of the many workshops and the networking events to help ensure future success."

The skills-building workshops covered a range of topics, including estimating and bidding, electronic bidding, building alliances, business plan basics, project management and social media marketing.

This year's TCTR included a popular session called, "Face Time with the Primes," allowing associations, agencies, subcontractors, primes and IDOT staff to share ideas, recognize obstacles and potential opportunities.

The conference concluded with an awards luncheon recognizing

outstanding firms, including the work of Mrs. Marla Lockett-Robinson, President of MYKA Trucking. Mrs. Lockett-Robinson started her business with one truck, her husband as driver and a heavy dose of initiative. She is now recognized as a stalwart DBE who maximized all of IDOT's resources to achieve her goal.

Conference attendees represented firms in construction, trucking, engineering, professional consulting and design.

The event, which celebrates its 25th anniversary next year, is hosted by the IDOT's Office of Business and Workforce Diversity.

For more information, visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/obwd/obwdprograms.html>.

Historical Tidbits: Minorities in Transportation

In this issue, Diversity Matters! takes the opportunity to observe National Women's History month and highlight significant contributions women have made to the transportation industry.

1911, Harriet Quimby became the first woman in America to get a pilot's license.

1921, Bessie Coleman was the first African-American woman pilot.

1922, Helen Schultz founded the first woman-owned busline, Red Ball Transportation Company.

Joan Claybrook was appointed to head

the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 1977.

Elizabeth Dole was appointed the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Also in 1983, Carmen Turner became the General Manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the first African-American woman to lead a major transit agency.

Closer to home, in April 2010, Kristi Lafleur was appointed executive director of the Illinois Tollway by the Tollway Board of Directors following a nationwide search. She is the first woman to serve in this role since the

agency was created in 1953.

In November 2011, Ann L. Schneider, appointed by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, became the first female secretary of transportation.

Secretary Schneider recognizes the importance of a diverse workforce and encourages all employees, including women, to work together to address key challenges and do what is best for their respective communities.

For more information, visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/wit/index.htm>.

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 February 10-16 2013, there was an overall workforce of 23.6% minorities and 4.3% female on the MRB project. For more information, please visit <http://www.newriverbridge.org/>.