



Diversity Digest

BUILDING A BETTER NEW JERSEY...TOGETHER!

SCC Bonding Assistance Program Helping NJ Small Businesses Thrive

Last year, the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) awarded Surety Bond Associates (SBA) a three-year contract to develop and operate the Bonding Assistance Program for small, minority, and women owned firms. The program enhances the ability of small, minority, and women owned firms to compete for school construction contracts by providing these firms with access to free technical assistance in business and financial planning; accounting and job costing; credit repair; procurement assistance; and bonding/loan application assistance. Additionally, the program provides access to bonding through several surety companies and admission to the US Small Business Administration's Surety Bond Guarantee Program, as well as access to working capital through a variety of lenders offering special programs to smaller firms.

"The goal of the Bonding Assistance Program is to eliminate the fundamental barriers that small, women and minority-owned firms have historically encountered when accessing the bonding and lending resources required to compete for public construction projects," said SCC CEO John F. Spencer. "Surety Bond Associates provides contractors with access to all the tools and training necessary to develop and grow their business, and ultimately compete and participate on school construction projects."

Solidly underway, the SBA has already successfully put 11 bond programs in place, including a \$300,000 single/\$600,000 aggregate bond line for All Pro Contracting, LLC a general construction, excavation and demolition company located in Orange, NJ, and a \$1,000,000 bond line for an MBE company



To date, SCC's Bonding Program has put into place \$12 million in bonds for 11 contractors. Pictured here are SBA President Ellen Neylan (right) and Bond Manager Carol Beaton.

specializing in HVAC/mechanical. In addition, SBA has over 30 bond applications in the pipeline, and seven of these contractors are receiving technical assistance. SBA's team is comprised of seasoned professionals with proven experience and success in this

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A Message from Governor Jim McGreevey

Over the past two years, New Jersey has confronted serious challenges and we've faced many difficult decisions. But with your support, we made the tough choices that had to be made to put New Jersey on the right track. Most importantly, we refused to lose sight of the values that are the hallmark of government and the compassion that is the foundation of the work we do.



We're strengthening communities and building brighter futures across New Jersey with our historic \$8.6 billion school construction program—the largest public construction program ever undertaken by New Jersey and one of the largest programs of its type in the nation.

Under the leadership of the Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) and CEO John F. Spencer, we recently broke ground for community schools in Paterson and West New York. A series of exciting projects have been proposed in cities such as Camden, East Orange, New

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For more information on New Jersey's Schools Construction Corporation, check us out at
www.njscc.com

Imperial Construction:

Diversity in People, Diversity in Projects

Imperial Construction Group's story is one characterized by persistence, determination, and success. Founded in 1986 by Frank Dominguez, president and CEO, Imperial began as a small electrical contracting company with only five employees. From these modest beginnings, the company quickly expanded its scope to include general contracting and construction management services.

Along with Dominguez, Imperial's two other principals have been with the company since its inception. Lou Fernandez is responsible for business development, marketing, and community outreach efforts. Richard Briggs provides quality control and oversees estimating and field operations. Today, Imperial Construction Group is a leading construction management firm in New Jersey and one of the fastest-growing Hispanic-owned firms in the nation.

With a strong experience base of federal, military, and healthcare projects, Imperial concentrated its focus on school construction projects about four years ago. What began as a few general contracting jobs has expanded to include construction management services. Imperial has teamed with Bovis Lend Lease as a project management firm (PMF) on several New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) contracts, including the Pilot Program A: Elizabeth District; Northern Region; and Region 9: Irvington, Hoboken and Harrison School Districts.

Currently, Imperial is working as the lead PMF on the Harrison Public Schools contract. This project, valued at \$65 million, includes the construction of new facilities, conversions of existing ones, as well as renovations and additions throughout the district.

So what gives Imperial an edge over construction management firms in this business? As a New Jersey-based firm, Imperial is thoroughly familiar with the local construction industry and is aware of the nuances that make each community and school district distinct. "Imperial truly goes 'above and

beyond," said Drew Napolitano, program director for the Harrison project. "For example, in the construction and renovation project for Harrison Public Schools, we've made sure that every school facility has some unique community feature included in its design, such as a multipurpose athletic field open to local residents.

"Another factor that gives Imperial the edge over its competitors is our level of involvement in the design process. Our staff meets weekly with the architects, looking closely at the designs and changing them until we are satisfied that they meet and exceed the needs of our clients. We are committed, along with the SCC, to being active participants in the process and with the community—right from the start."

In addition to its work in Harrison, Imperial has completed or is currently involved in SCC building programs in other school districts, including Elizabeth, East Orange, Neptune, Paterson, Phillipsburg, Bridgeton, Union City, Passaic, Newark and Hoboken. The firm is also active in SCC-funded school projects in Princeton, Piscataway and Weehawken. "We have enjoyed working with the SCC on various projects throughout the Garden State," said Lou Fernandez. "We believe in the worthy goals of this organization, and remain dedicated to providing superior facilities for New Jersey's young learners."

As a minority-owned business that has risen through the ranks, Imperial knows how difficult the road to success can be, and looks to share its experiences and knowledge with other small, minority, and women-owned businesses. The firm is an active participant in several programs that are aimed at making small, minority, and women-owned businesses more competitive in the marketplace.

One such program is the U.S. Small Business Administration's Mentor-Protégé Program. Imperial has been involved for the past three years, and was the first New Jersey-based firm accepted into the program. This program



Imperial's executive team, from left to right: Lou R. Fernandez, principal; Frank Dominguez, president and CEO; Richard Briggs, principal.

partnered Imperial with a small business protégé to which it offers its expertise, resources, and capabilities. This enhances the protégé's capability of competing more successfully for contracts.

When it comes to subcontractors, Imperial stands by its motto, "Diversity in People, Diversity in Projects." The firm extends opportunities to local, small, minority, and women-owned businesses as much as possible. Over the past four years, Imperial has awarded more than \$25 million in contracts to such firms.

"We've always felt that it was our responsibility to use local small contractors," said Fernandez. "In addition, our firm has always strived to exceed the goals and requirements set by the state in regard to using small, minority, and women-owned businesses.

"With the success we've enjoyed on project management jobs like the Harrison Public School District's construction and renovation campaign, Imperial has shown throughout the state what we've always known—we are ready and capable to handle larger management jobs. We're thankful the SCC gave Imperial the chance to show the communities in which it's working that a commitment to quality and a commitment to diversity leads to success." ■

Workforce Training in Action!

Free training for Abbott district residents interested in the construction industry is available through the SCC's Construction Trades Training Program for Women and Minorities (CTTP-WM). For more information, please contact E. Tracie Long at (609) 656-2997 or contact the local Training Programs listed below.

Bergen County —Bergen County Technical Schools	Darlene Christmas	(201) 329-9600 x5552
Camden —American Community Partnerships	Ron Green	(856) TRN-4-JBS
Elizabeth —City of Elizabeth	Jessica Topolosky	(908) 820-4030
Jersey City —City of Jersey City	Moses Ballon	(201) 860-4207
Monmouth County —County Vocational School	Stanley Reed	(732) 229-3019
Newark —NJ Institute for Social Justice	Rodney Brutton	(973) 624-9400
New Brunswick —Middlesex County Vocational & Technical Schools	Mary Payne	(732) 247-9066 x19
Paterson —Paterson Public Schools	Idida Rodriguez	(973) 413-1607
Perth Amboy —Jewish Renaissance Foundation	Lourdes Ilia	(732) 324-2114
Plainfield —City of Plainfield	John Brinkley	(908) 226-8031



Jersey City—A January Workforce Training outreach event draws nearly 200 residents eager to participate in free construction trade preparatory training programs. State, city and training partners gear up to provide services to increase reading and math literacy to help residents compete for union apprenticeships.

Garfield—The first graduates of the Bergen County construction trades training program anticipate the start of the 2004 union testing season.



DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT



Population: **56,271**
 School District: **9,529 students**
 SCC Projected Share of State Funding: **\$84,800,000**
 Contracts/Grants Awarded to Date: **\$22,719,986**

★ Vineland, NJ

SCC projects in Vineland include the planned construction of a new elementary school and two new middle schools. Additionally, a new pre-K through Grade 5 school for 820 students on a 9.7-acre campus in the heart of the city was recently announced by Governor McGreevey as part of his new Demonstration Projects program created to spur economic renewal in Abbott communities.

Construction on a new addition at the Johnstone Elementary School is now complete. An addition to Veterans Memorial Intermediate School is currently in the design phase with work projected to begin in late 2004.

Health and safety projects have been completed at the Rossi and D'Ippolito intermediate schools and are planned for Cunningham, Mennies, Winslow, and Durand elementary schools and for both existing high schools.

Rehabilitation projects are planned for Barse Elementary School and Landis Intermediate School.

Bonding Assistance Program

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arena. Ellen Neylan, President and Program Director, has managed a similar program for the City of Philadelphia over the past two years. Since the inception of Philadelphia's DBE Bond Program, SBA has placed over 50 bonds for DBE contractors on projects valued over \$16 million. The majority of the contractors received their first bond through this program.

The Bonding Assistance Program's consulting services and resources are available to contractors on a statewide basis through the New Jersey Small Business Development Center's existing regional centers and a network of host institutions and association partners. SBA Bond Manager, Carol Beaton is available to discuss eligibility and application procedures with all interested contractors. She can be reached at 888-404-5815 or via e-mail at carol@suretybondassociates.com. ■

A Message from Gov. McGreevey

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Brunswick, Union City and Vineland. We are also reaching out to minority businesses in ways that have never been done before.

Under the leadership of our great Secretary of State Regena Thomas, we are conducting a disparity study on the state's contracting and procurement practices. These studies, which are expected to be complete by this summer, will help us to develop effective approaches to ensure that access to opportunity exists for all people regardless of race, gender or geographic location.

We want to find out if there is a disparity between the number of qualified minority and women-owned businesses ready, willing and able to perform a particular service and the number of contractors/vendors actually engaged to perform such service.

To further strengthen our school construction program in urban areas, the SCC has teamed up with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to ensure the environmental safety of potential school sites in a faster, more comprehensive and effective way. This new plan will accelerate the school construction projects by more effectively identifying any environmental issues on land the SCC is considering for potential school sites. This will help expedite the process for land acquisition, which is one of the most challenging aspects facing the SCC, especially in New Jersey's urban areas.

The actions we are taking with the SCC, like those we are taking on all quality of life issues, will help to lead the way to stronger partnerships, better programs, more effective services and better quality of life.

In the last two years, we became the first state in the nation to make racial profiling a crime, built nearly 17,000 units of affordable housing; enacted the toughest telemarketing and predatory lending laws in the nation, and increased enrollment in our Abbott pre-school program by 40 percent.

As we continue to move forward and build upon our accomplishments, we must remain committed to building our community from common values and forging a future of common aspirations. ■

LEADERS FOR 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



Craig A. Stanley
Member, NJ General Assembly
28th Legislative District
(representing part of Essex County)
Chairman, Assembly Education Committee

What motivated you to seek office?
 "The need for a greater community involvement in government as well as the desire to get actively engaged in the implementation of the Abbott v. Burke decision. The historic 'Abbott' decision has the potential to lift student achievement to unprecedented heights. The decision mandates aggressive state intervention and support for early childhood education, supplemental and tutorial programs, school reform and facilities construction and improvement in the state's neediest school districts."

Why do you think New Jersey's school construction initiative is important?
 "Successfully meeting the educational needs of our children is greatly improved when we replace dilapidated, unsafe and overcrowded facilities with 21st Century learning centers. These school construction programs represent not only badly needed facilities upgrades, but opportunities for economic development and jobs to some of our state's most depressed economies and communities. That is why as Chairman of the Sub-Committee on School Facilities, I will be working to ensure the SCC receives the support it needs to successfully complete this initiative."



James E. McGreevey, Governor



NJ SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION

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 P.O. Box 991
 Trenton, NJ 08625-0991
 (609) 292-1680 - phone
 (609) 393-6714 - fax

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Diversity & Emerging Business Markets is dedicated to increasing the availability and accessibility of school construction opportunities for small, women and minority-owned businesses and individuals in New Jersey.

For more information on how you can be part of our effort to build a better New Jersey, contact Dan Kirton, Program Manager, Office of Diversity at (609) 292-1680

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
www.njsc.com

Corrections

The husband of Lita Marcelo Abele, featured in last month's issue, holds 49% ownership of US Lumber.

The photo on page 2 was of Abele and Frank Tamburro of Tamburro Brothers.

The newly formed Asian-American organization referred to on page 1 and page 2 is called the New Jersey Asian-American Commission

Snapshots



SCC-QWIC Small Contractors Training Program. Contact Joan Walker at (856) 829-7942 or joanwalker@qwicinc.com for more information.