

Diversity Digest

Richard J. Codey, Acting Governor
John F. Spencer, CEO

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BUILDING A BETTER NEW JERSEY...TOGETHER!

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NJSCC's Office of Diversity & Emerging Business Markets Goals and Objectives Are Paying Off

In just two years, the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation's (SCC) Office of Diversity & Emerging Business Markets has shown tremendous progress in meeting and exceeding mandated small business participation goals of a minimum of 25% for all contract award values.

A recent review of SCC's contracting performance shows that 39% of all SCC construction contracts released in 2004—\$365 million out of \$930 million in total contract award dollars—have gone to certified Small Business Enterprises (SBEs). Nearly 60% of SCC's design contracts in 2004 have been awarded to SBEs, \$46.7 million out of a total contract award value of \$80.8 million.

"While we're extremely proud of the work we've done to ensure that small businesses, and those owned by minorities and women, are given real opportunities to take part in the state's school construction initiative, we want to do even more" said Jack Spencer, CEO of the Schools Construction Corporation.

"The road to reaching these performance levels hasn't always been easy, but it has always been gratifying."

Despite an agreement by the State of New Jersey that ended public contract set-asides for women-owned and minority-owned business, the SCC has exceeded its goals for small business participation.

Through innovative programs like its Contractor Training Program, Bonding &

Working Capital Assistance Program, SBE Contract Carve-Out Program, and public outreach efforts, the SCC has worked hard to meet its mandate to ensure small, women-owned and minority-owned businesses are a part of the agency's efforts to build state-of-the-art schools throughout New Jersey. Additionally, the SCC has undertaken an initiative to create a Mentor/Protégé Program that will be implemented in the near future.

"Our success at ensuring a high level of small business participation is certainly due to the programs we've developed and staff commitment," said Kellie Drakeford, Director of the SCC's Office of Diversity & Emerging Business Markets. "However, we cannot take all the credit. Much credit goes to all of our stakeholders in the process." ■

NJSCC Contract Status Report

The New Jersey School Construction Corporation (SCC) has awarded 24 construction packages impacting 22 schools in 15 districts totaling \$237,744,973 year-to-date through March 15.

SCC has also executed 115 Section 15 grants impacting 91 facilities in 39 school districts that receive less than 55% of their budget in State aid. These grants supported school construction projects totaling \$329,649,507, with the State's share of that funding at \$100,111,019. ■



Director of SCC's Office of Diversity & Emerging Business Markets Kellie Drakeford (left) along with CEO Jack Spencer at a recent workshop held in conjunction with the Building Contractors Association aimed at increasing small business participation in school construction contracts.

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MZM Construction & Management Co.:

Seeking New Areas for Growth by Building Diversity in its Business Model

Marjorie Perry's journey from the public relations industry to the sometimes hard-scrabble world of construction and construction management hasn't been easy, but it's ultimately been successful.

Ten years after buying out her partners to become the Chief Executive Officer and sole owner of MZM Construction & Management Co., Perry's firm has continued to realize business growth, albeit carefully managed growth to ensure the company's long-term success.

"I came to MZM in 1992 with two partners who knew the construction industry," Perry said from her company headquarters in Newark. "My role was on the marketing side—I had previously worked in the public relations and marketing industry. Two years later I had an opportunity to buy out my partners and venture into the construction industry on my own and I took it."

Admittedly, Perry suffered a few "bumps and bruises" along the way, learning some hard but valuable lessons about how the construction industry worked. But, the State's set-aside program for women and minority-owned businesses helped Perry weather those early trials. Now, after a decade in the business, and after earning a degree from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth University, Perry has steered MZM on a course for success.

"I think the elimination of the WBE and MBE set-asides had an effect on the company for a short minute," Perry said of the New Jersey Supreme Court's action last year that ended public contract set-asides for women-owned and minority-owned businesses. "Because we never saw (that decision) coming, it took us by surprise for a bit. But, we had built strong relationships and a solid reputation in the industry and we felt no long-term effects from that change."

MZM remains a certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and was pre-qualified by the Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) three years ago, enabling the company to bid on SCC work. Currently, MZM is providing carpentry and rough-in work on Newark's new Central High School and Science Park High School. The firm also provides construction-related and construction management services on SCC projects in Elizabeth, where it serves as a subcontractor to Bovis Lend/Lease, the district's Project Management Firm (PMF) of record. Perry has plans to bid on future SCC work in East Orange, as well.

While running a successful construction firm that employs ten administrative staffers in its main office and dozens more on each project site, Perry has also paid close attention to learning the construction industry, developing sound business practices and charting a clear course for future growth.

"We're trying to build diversity in our business," she said. "We've made our mark on the construction side and now we're working to build new business in the construction management field.

"I've always felt, though, that a company has to be good and ready to reach into new business areas or go after the larger contracts. Measured growth is important. If you bid on everything that comes across the table, it isn't always the best thing. If you're going to go after the bigger contracts you really have to be able to handle and manage them properly. If you don't, they may not be profitable to your business."

Perry continues to improve her own business skills as well. After earning her undergraduate business degree from Dartmouth, she enrolled in the New Jersey Institute of Technology's (NJIT) MBA program, from which she'll graduate next year.



Marjorie Perry, owner and CEO of MZM Construction & Management Co.

She's also received a host of honors and awards for her work on behalf of small business across the industry spectrum, including the New Jersey Small Business Development Center's *2004 Success Award* and Odessa Network's *Outstanding Woman in Business Award* for 2004. She was named the University of Medicine & Dentistry's *Entrepreneur of the Year* in 2003 and has spoken across the state on behalf of small businesses.

"The SCC's pre-qualification process wasn't easy but it has paid off," Perry said. "It's made our firm more visible and it's helped me improve the way I run my company. Even though we can't go after the multi-million dollar projects just yet, it's helped us build relationships, grow and learn.

"Through my work on SCC projects I've built relationships with decision-makers at all levels. That's helped me become of sort of advocate for small businesses as well as grow my own." ■

Construction Trades Training Program for Women and Minorities



Mercer County Building And Construction Trades Council Meets With Trenton CTTT Graduates
 (Left) More than 40 graduates of the Trenton CTTT (SCOPE) recently sat down, one-on-one with representatives of nine different construction trades at IBEW, Local 269 in Trenton.
 (Right) Tools of the ironworker trade were some of the items on display to help future union apprentices visualize working in the construction field.



Partners Of The CTTT Attend 2005 Apprenticeship Conference In Atlantic City
 CTTT staff, management and the building trades attended the 1½ day conference where keynote presentations were made by several state VIPs including Jerry Murphy, SCC Chief Operating Officer.



Essex County Union Apprentices Robert Phelps and Michelle Boone
 Robert Phelps, Roofer, Local 4 (left photo) and Michelle Boone, Steamfitter, Local 475 (right photo) discussed with Conference participants the paths that led them to union membership. Robert had a troubled background, while Michelle, a single mother, had lost interest in her low-level, dead-end corporate job. Thanks to the Essex County CTTT run by Rodney Brutton (right) of the NJ Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ) Robert is now a second-year Roofer apprentice, and Michelle is a first-year Steamfitter apprentice and the first African-American female member of Local 475.

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT



★ Garfield, NJ

Population: 29,786
 School District: 4,091 students
 SCC Projected Share of State Funding: \$140,789,429
 Contracts/Grants Awarded to Date: \$58,893,988

Garfield's Long-Range Facilities Plan will yield five new elementary schools, a new middle school, additions to the High School and School #8, a new Early Childhood Center (ECC) and a conversion of School #7 to an ECC. Last October, the District celebrated the opening of its new Early Childhood Center, the first elementary school to be constructed in Garfield since 1929.

The ECC is a state-of-the-art 45,000 sq. ft. facility for 360 pre-K children located near a residential area at Ray Street. It will ultimately become part of a new "education zone" along Ray Street that will also include a new middle school to be built on a neighboring site. The middle school is a 179,000 square foot facility that will accommodate 1,100 students when it is completed in September of 2006.

James Madison, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Washington Irving, and Woodrow Wilson elementary schools are all slated to be replaced. Students will continue to attend classes while the new facilities are built on each site. As the new facilities come on-line and students transition to them, the old facilities will be demolished so play areas and parking can be built. The existing Roosevelt Elementary School will be renovated to create another ECC.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School has received health and safety improvements and will be converted to an elementary school, with a new addition to provide more learning space. Columbus Elementary School and Garfield High School have received health and safety renovations as well.

SCC Construction Trades Training Program for Women and Minorities (CTTP-WM)

For more information, please contact the local training programs listed below or E. Tracie Long at the SCC at (609) 341-5916.

Camden—American Community Partnerships	Ron Green	(866) TRN-4-JBS
Elizabeth—City of Elizabeth	Jessica Topolosky	(908) 820-4030
Jersey City—City of Jersey City	Moses Ballon	(201) 860-4207
Essex County—NJ Institute for Social Justice	Rodney Brutton	(973) 624-9400
Paterson—Paterson Public Schools	Idida Rodriguez	(973) 413-1607
Trenton—City of Trenton	Ruth Carter	(609) 989-3303

Myers Construction Finds Success in SCC's Surety Bonding Program

For Jeff Myers, Vice President of Myers Construction Group, getting access to surety bonding and working capital wasn't anything new. The Palmyra-based general contractor had been obtaining bonding and working capital for projects since the company was founded in 2002.

But the New Jersey School Construction Corporation's Surety Bonding Program gave Myers access to a wider range of bonding options so he could select programs that best fit his business needs. And the relationships he's built through the program have helped fuel his company's business growth.

"We were bonded before but we decided to go with the SCC's program, first because of the relationship with SCC," Myers said. "I also liked that the program was linked with the SBA (Small Business Administration).

"Once we got involved in the program and began working with Surety Bonding Associates (the consultant hired by SCC to administer the Surety Bonding Program), we found that the bonding limits—both aggregate and single—seemed to better fit our company than options were had been offered before."

Currently, Myers Construction is engaged in SCC projects in Phillipsburg and Burlington City, providing framing and drywall packages. But, Myers' relationship with the SCC and Surety Bonding Associates had led to even more growth.

"Surety Bonding Associates has placed more than a half dozen bonds for us, some on work outside of the SCC," Myers said. "Getting to know them, and our work on SCC projects as a sub to larger general contractors, has helped us build relationships and pick up some additional non-SCC projects."

Now, Myers is nearing completion of his 8-week Contractor Training Program course also offered by the SCC.

"I'm entering the 7th week of our 8-week session on the Contractor Training Program and I have to say it's been a real learning experience," said Myers. "They've had some really good trainers in the program who have a lot of experience and I've learned a lot from them." ■



Richard J. Codey, Acting Governor



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of Diversity and 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 Kellie Drakeford, Director, Office of Diversity and Emerging Business Markets at (609) 292-1680.

**WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
www.njscc.com**