RASC Contractors’ Clearinghouse 2015

Contractors and exhibitors quickly filled the Con Edison Headquarters Building auditorium March 20th, for the Regional Alliance Annual Contractors’ Clearinghouse. RASC Executive Director, Earle J. Walker welcomed the crowd and immediately launched the day’s program. The theme of this year’s Clearinghouse was unmistakable, M/WBEs are in demand. Con Edison’s new Vice President, Supply Chain, Saumil Shukla, emphasized this point. “Our decade-long collaboration with RASC has helped Con Edison to match its procurement requirements with a pool of capable M/WBEs, a matchmaking partnership we wish to build upon.” Michael Jones-Bey, Director, Supplier Diversity, asserted “We want more M/WBE prime contractors, as well as, subcontractors, to take advantage of our growing contract opportunities.” Michael Lombardi, Construction Manager, Central Construction, Con Edison, later detailed the high contract performance benchmarks of the agency, with particular emphasis on safety protocols.

The NYC Department of Design and Construction (NYC DDC) Associate Commissioner Christine Flaherty and Assistant Commissioner Miguel Cedeno of Build-it-Back & Housing Recovery, continued the bid for more M/WBEs. The commissioners outlined the agency’s new construction management, design and contracting services program to assist homeowners and landlords rebuild and repair their Hurricane Sandy damaged buildings.

Dr. Feniosky Peña-Mora, Commissioner
NYC Department of Design and Construction

In April, 2014, Dr. Peña-Mora was appointed the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction by Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Among his agency’s $10 billion portfolio of projects is the rehabilitation of High Bridge, which connects Manhattan to the Bronx, the new Police Academy in College Point Queens that will train more than 1,600 police officers each year, and the Ocean Breeze Athletic Center, representative of a continued investment in neighborhoods adversely impacted by Hurricane Sandy. By all accounts, he brings a new sense of urgency to providing contract opportunities to minority and women-owned contractors.

Dr. Peña-Mora is also the Edwin Howard Armstrong Professor of Civil Engineering Mechanics at Columbia University. Previously, he was Dean of the Columbia University School of Engineering and Applied Science. He held the position of Chief Information Technology Consultant on the Boston Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project, where he focused on information technology support for change management and process integration during the design and construction phases of the massive $14.8 billion, two-decade long engineering endeavor.
In 2014, the New York State Empire Development Corporation introduced the NYS Contract System (NYSCS) as a gateway to Governor Cuomo’s Minority and Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Program. Some of the benefits include: expedited and improved online M/WBE certification and re-certification; online reporting for M/WBE utilization reports and goal plans; robust contract monitoring and improved tracking of expenditures; M/WBE compliance and payment verification; and outreach management to easily inform M/WBE vendors about procurement opportunities, bid solicitations, classes and training sessions. RASC has long advocated for this level of government transparency, a positive and necessary step to forward the progress of M/WBEs in public sector procurement. We congratulate Governor Cuomo for his new initiative.

New York City has also made recent progress in this area as well.

“The public can now see in real time where money is flowing at all levels of contracting in one place. These new features will provide transparency about M/WBE spending as never before and also give crucial insight into how contracts are distributed once they are awarded.”

So NYC City Comptroller Scott Springer stated during the launch of the City’s new Checkbook 2.0 computer system that monitors procurement dollars and progress of payments to prime and subcontractor M/WBE firms. Checkbook users can now use “dashboards” – or dedicated screen views – to see master agreements, contract modifications, payment amounts, and more concerning M/WBE contractors across City agencies. These featured dashboards allow users to view M/WBE contract and spending information by vendor, agency, or for the city as a whole. M/WBE vendors can view current agency contracts, identify prime vendors that contract with M/WBE subcontractors, and identify agencies that could potentially utilize services provided by M/WBE vendors.

The highpoint of these New York State and New York City M/WBE Contract Compliance programs should be the sound verification of M/WBE participation. Contract data that comes out of the system is only as good as the verification process used to account for M/WBE participation. In this regard, NYS and NYC should utilize dedicated staff and/or contract professional and experienced compliance consultants. Last but not least, sanctions should be levied upon companies that do not comply with “good faith” effort requirements to contract M/WBEs.

Best Regards, Earle J. Walker

NYC Department of Design and Construction (NYC DDC) seeking S/M/WBEs

The Department of Design and Construction (“DDC”) and the Housing Recovery Office (“HRO”) are establishing 8 pre-qualified lists of small, minority, and women contractors for furnishing all labor, materials and equipment necessary to perform construction repair, electrical, plumbing and mechanical work for 1 to 4 family homes that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Construction management (“CM”) firms holding contracts with DDC for this Build It Back project will be required to procure all construction contracts from these pre-qualified lists.

To pre-qualify and access NYC DDC link, visit RASC website: www.regional-alliance.org
A recently completed Jacob K. Javits Convention project gave Curtis Partition Corporation an opportunity to put its multiple talents on display. This large scale fit-out required drywall, Architectural Carritec, Lindner, and Decoustics ceilings, light-gauge metal framing, high-end plaster finishing, OSHA protection, bathroom finishes, and architectural services. Regional Alliance Charter Member, Curtis Partition Corporation, is well situated to benefit from an ongoing trend in the NYC construction industry. Over the past 70 months, for which the NYC Building Congress has data, 70 percent of construction spending in the office and commercial sectors has been devoted to upgrades of existing space.

The drywall and ceiling contractor specializes in interiors and core and shell. During the first 40 years Curtis perfected its drywall business, and later expanded its services to include acoustic ceilings. This latter move enabled the company to double its revenues and service the residential, institutional, and retail construction sectors. “In the time-critical fit-out sector, we provide a complete scope from the initial bid, utilize the latest scheduling software to task down to the hour, and deploy skilled and highly experienced field staff to execute the job,” says President Ajay Narula. The company’s clients include Google-YouTube, Sumitomo, the NYC School Construction Authority, the MTA, and the Jacob Javits Convention Center. Curtis has an office staff of 25 people and a field force that fluctuates between 150 and 300 workers. Curtis has received MBE certifications from NYS Empire State Corporation, the Port Authority of NY & NJ, NYC School Construction Authority and the City of New York.

Office upgrades are of two types. Category A fit-outs is where tenant spaces are completed by the developer and include the basics: raised floors, suspended ceilings, mechanical and electrical service distribution, internal surface features and blinds. While Category B fit-outs customize spaces according to tenant requirements, incorporating final finishes and branding, offices, meeting rooms, boardrooms, conference rooms, reception areas, kitchen area, special lighting, ICT equipment, audio-visual equipment, and office furniture.

The ever-present drywall, a panel made of gypsum plaster pressed between two thick sheets of paper, creates most walls and some types of ceilings. For large scale commercial construction, Curtis splits work between drywall mechanics (hangers) who install the wallboard, and the tapers and mud men, who finish the joints and cover nail heads with compound. “We work with a full range of board products to meet client requirements, including regular white boards, fire-resistant and “Firecode” C boards, moisture resistant green boards, water and mold resistant blue boards, cement boards, noise resistant sound boards, and re-cycled enviro-boards,” Mr. Arula explains.

Dropped ceilings, a secondary ceiling hung below the main structural ceiling, are another essential feature of the fit-out process. Modern dropped ceilings were created to hide building infrastructure, including piping, wiring, and ductwork, and leaves a plenum space above the dropped ceiling, to allow access for repairs and inspection. The enhancing qualities of dropped ceilings enjoy great demand. A noisy room can overstimulate occupants, while a too quiet interior may seem dull and uninviting.

Curtis Partition Corporation has truly found an essential and enduring place in the construction marketplace. Website: www.curtispartition.com
“The M/WBE participation goal for this program is at least 25%, with local firms in the impacted area also encouraged to participate,” declared Ms. Flaherty. NYC DDC new agency-wide M/WBE goals pursuant to Local Law 1 are 38% for construction services, 45% for goods under $100,000, and 37% for professional services.

Stephen Walter, MTA Sr. Director, Procurement, outlined the vast procurement requirements of the agency. “We have 4,600 buses, 6,000 railcars, 1,300 outer borough buses, and 2,000 ParaTransit Access-a-Ride vehicles that make 25,000 trips a day 24/7. Our operations also include MTA Bridges & Tunnels, the Long Island Railroad and Metro North,” he added. Mr. Walter urged those firms seeking contract opportunities to visit the agency’s webpage www.mta.gov which provides a comprehensive listing.

“We are actively looking for M/WBEs,” said George A. Cleary, MTA Deputy Director Small Business Mentoring Program, Department of Diversity and Civil Rights. Mr. Cleary confirmed that currently 135 M/WBEs were registered with the MTA Small Business Mentoring Program but the goal is to increase the number to at least 190 in 2015. Since its inception, the MTA Small Business Development Program (SBDP), which includes the Mentoring Program and the MTA Small Business Federal Program (SBFP), has awarded small businesses $109 million spanning 147 projects. During the first four years of the program, 2,632 jobs were created and 46 loans were approved, totaling $5 million, under a strategic partnership with Carver Federal Savings Bank.

At the conclusion of the Contractors’ Clearinghouse presentations, contractors went on to converse with numerous exhibitor teams and get the drop on contract look-ahead schedules, making new contacts along the way. See you next year!
Clearinghouse

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On January 13, 2015, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of Phase 2, a $175 million project that added 11 gates and 75,000 square feet to Terminal 4, Concourse B, as part of Delta’s $1.4 billion Redevelopment Program at JFK International Airport. The new gates at Terminal 4 feature enclosed jet bridges and offers customers proximity to the flagship Sky Club and chef-driven restaurants. The expansion also facilitates intra-terminal connections with the addition of a new JFK Jitney bus stop at the end of Concourse B.

As part of the program management team the Regional Alliance worked diligently to help ensure minority, women, and local business participation, as well as workforce diversity on the project. Delta leadership made it clear, “including minority, women, and local businesses in this redevelopment project is paramount to Delta Air Lines; we intend not only to meet the Port Authority of NY and NJ MBE goal of 12% and WBE goal of 5%, but to exceed them,” says Delta Air Lines Director of Corporate Real Estate for New York and New Jersey, Ryan Marzullo.

Accordingly, Delta increased the redevelopment program’s goals to 30% for Phase 2 of the project. As of April 2015, percentages of participation for Phase 2 stood at 17.4% MBE participation and 12.65% WBE participation for a combined total of 30.05% MWBE participation. MBE participation on all phases of the project was $126,747,567 or 14.62% and WBE participation was $76,658,900 or 8.84% for a combined total of $203,406,467, or 23.46%, additionally 48 local businesses were awarded contracts totaling $52,955,234.

“The success of Delta’s MWBE program is truly the result of a dedicated project team that identified every possible avenue of participation on this project,” states Earle J. Walker, RASC Executive Director.

“All of the Delta partners: Arup/SOM, Gensler, Turner Construction Corporation, Scalamandre and Sons, Lend Lease, LLC, AECOM, STV Inc. and Satterfield & Pontikes, as well as, other program collaborators York College Small Business Development Center, Association of Women Construction Workers of America (AWCWA), the Council of Airport Opportunity (CAO), Circle of Sisters and Brothers Moves, Inc. (C.O.S.A.B), Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corp. (RDRC), Lloyd Douglas Consulting Company (LDCC), and MWBE Leasing & Consulting, were important contributors to the success of the program,” affirms Cassandra Hill, RASC MWBE Program Manager. The program also featured many RASC special initiatives such as community outreach events, “meet and greet” sessions, procurement opportunity events, and workforce events like “Hire on the Spot.”

Phase 1 of the redevelopment program was completed in May 2013 adding nine new and seven renovated international gates, a new 24,000 square foot flagship Delta Sky Club with a first of its kind Sky Deck Terrace, enhanced security checkpoints, dining and retail facilities, dual taxiways improved customs and border protection and baggage claim facilities. Also included as Phase 1B was the demolition of Delta’s Terminal 3 which will be used for aircraft parking.
Performing general conditions work for Delta Air Lines on Phase 2 of the Terminal 4 Redevelopment and Expansion Project at JFK International Airport Project is Creative Construction Services Corp., which is finishing up their work as Phase 2 of the JFK project winds down. Remaining construction items, which include drywall, flooring, acoustical ceiling installation, hardware installation, project clean-up and rubbish removal are completed and checked off methodically. “Construction site cleanup, in particular, involves a final cleaning and removal of left over construction materials. This often involves long hours, heavy lifting and attention to detail,” says firm President Hanson James. The work performed by Creative has been substantial and has earned the recognition and appreciation of Delta Air Lines, which will present Creative Construction Service Corp. with the national “Contractor of the Year” award on March 25th at Delta’s headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Ryan Marzullo, Delta Air Lines’ Director of Corporate Real Estate for New York and New Jersey, states “Creative has been a wonderful partner in executing the many varied tasks that were asked of them throughout the project, and they performed superbly. Their dedication and enthusiasm has been admirable and integral to the success of the project.”

The Delta award is a notable achievement for this Queens-based MBE firm founded in 2000 by Mr. James. Previously, he had been a journeyman carpenter with City Locals where he also served as a union steward. Tasks performed by carpenters today include: installing flooring, windows, doors, interior trim, cabinetry, solid surface, roofing, framing, siding, flooring, insulation, acoustical ceilings, computer-access flooring, metal framing, wall partitions, office furniture systems, trim and molding, ceiling treatments, exposed columns and beams, displays, mantels, staircases, metal studs, metal lath, and drywall.

This wide array of skills has enabled Creative to work in sync with first-tier construction management firms, Turner Construction Corp., Bovis Lend Lease and Skanska USA at the airport and other venues like Columbia University’s Manhattanville project uptown and NYU’s fit-out of the old MTA office building in Brooklyn’s Metro Tech district. “We installed C-joist lightweight floors for JetBlue’s lounge at the new JFK International Terminal 5, and drywall and acoustical ceilings for a variety of other jobs,” declares Mr. James.

Creative employs thirty field workers from Locals 79, 14, 15, the Teamsters, and has an office staff of seven. Going forward Creative has a strong market niche in airport construction which places extraordinary demands on contractors that have to navigate complex safety and security issues. “We have a talented and experienced team and the market for our services just continues to grow,” says Mr. James.

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