

# Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • Volume 11: Issue 01

WINTER 2023



## *Small Business Program*

The Authority is committed to small businesses playing a major role in building the statewide high-speed rail system. The Small Business Program has an aggressive 30 percent goal for small business participation including Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) and Micro-Business (MB).

## Table of Contents

3	<i>Mistler's Musings</i>	16	<i>Cultural Awareness Months</i>
5	<i>Small Business Events</i>	16	<i>Engineers Week</i>
6	<i>Speedreads</i>	17	<i>Small Business Certification Resources at Your Fingertips</i>
8	<i>VST Engineering</i>	18	<i>Structure Feature (Cedar Viaduct)</i>
10	<i>Pacific Boring</i>	19	<i>Progress in the Central Valley</i>
12	<i>Gregg Drilling, LLC</i>		
14	<i>Ed Duarte NorCal PTAC</i>		

**SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 01  
WINTER 2023**

**CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED  
RAIL AUTHORITY**

770 L Street, Suite 620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM**

Main: (916) 431-2930

Email: [sbprogram@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:sbprogram@hsr.ca.gov)

**Ashley Mistler**

*Small Business Advocate*

Email: [ashley.mistler@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:ashley.mistler@hsr.ca.gov)

**Annette Picetti**

*Small Business Outreach Manager*

Email: [annette.picetti@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:annette.picetti@hsr.ca.gov)

**Damon Dorn**

*Small Business Outreach Coordinator*

Email: [damon.dorn@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:damon.dorn@hsr.ca.gov)

**Asha Grayson**

*Small Business Technical Associate*

Email: [asha.grayson@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:asha.grayson@hsr.ca.gov)

**OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**Annie Parker**

*Interim Managing Editor*

Email: [annie.parker@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:annie.parker@hsr.ca.gov)

To access and download more information pertaining to the small business program, visit the Small Business Resources webpage at <https://hsr.ca.gov/small-business/>

The Investing in California Small Businesses newsletter is published quarterly by the Office of Communications of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

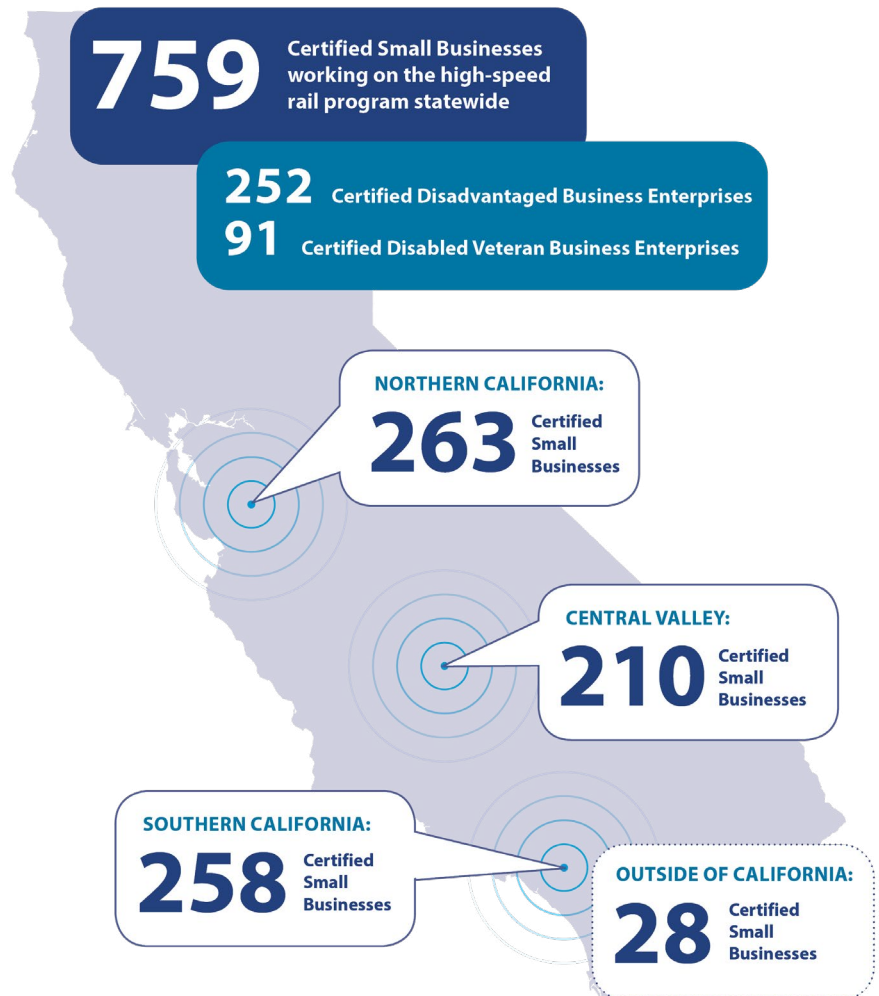
To view past newsletters visit:

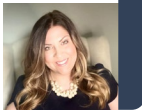
<https://hsr.ca.gov/business-opportunities/small-business-program/small-business-newsletter/>

[www.hsr.ca.gov](http://www.hsr.ca.gov)

**SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION**

*as of November 2022*





## Mistler's Musings – February Edition

It's official! 2023 is underway and the California High-Speed Rail Authority has hit the ground running. And as you will see from this column, our major push this year is to increase opportunities for small businesses to get connected with our program and widen the existing pool of small businesses to ensure that businesses owned by minorities or women-owned firms have a seat at the table.

First off, I would like to share some exciting news that Annette Picetti from my team has stepped into a new role in the Small Business Program as the Authority's Small Business Outreach Manager. Prior to joining the Authority in February 2022, she spent 10 years working for the Department of General Services, Procurement Division, and she also has more than a decade of experience in the private sector in marketing, graphic design and project coordinating architectural services for two firms in the Sacramento Region.

She and her team are going to be responsible for building on the already important work we are doing to connect with small businesses across the state to make sure that are ready and able to compete for high-speed rail contracts and procurement opportunities. Please feel free to tell her congratulations when you see her out at one of our events.

Back in the fall issue of this newsletter, we mentioned that Governor Newsom had signed several bills related to small businesses in California. I wanted to touch on one of them in particular. Assembly Bill 2019, authored by Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine), took effect on January 1. This legislation, widely supported throughout the small business community, mandates state departments and agencies to provide at least 25 percent of all procurement opportunities to small businesses, especially minority-owned and women-owned businesses. With this new mandate, it's more important now than ever that we partner



Annette Picetti, Small Business Outreach Manager

with our small business community to ensure that a diverse group of small businesses are ready to participate on the high-speed rail program.

As part of this effort, we recently launched an interactive website that has a number of resources available about how to do business with the state. We have also developed a series of fact sheets that cover what small business need to know to work with the state, from getting certified to staying in compliance. Think of them as a back-to-basics series. Below are links to the fact sheets, and we hope to include videos on these topics on the website soon.

- [Small Business 101 – Certification](#)
- [Small Business 102 – Prepare to Bid](#)
- [Small Business 103 – Won the Bid](#)
- [Small Business 104 – Post Award Event](#)

For 2023, we're also working to increase our outreach efforts and communicate out about small business opportunities through a combination of training opportunities, promotion of high-speed rail contracts and procurements, coordination with partner agencies and organizations and supporting small businesses who are currently doing business with us or want to.



## Mistler's Musings

Ashley Mistler • Small Business Advocate



The Authority's Small Business Section, led by Small Business Advocate Ashley Mistler and Process and Program Development Chief Catrina Blair, is responsible for creating and implementing a Small Business Program that is flexible, attainable, efficient and credible and assists with the Authority's efforts to meet the 30 percent small business participation goal.

Regarding training opportunities, we offer or participate in a variety of training opportunities, in person and virtually. This year, we have set a goal to participate in a minimum of two workshops per month to educate small businesses, expand awareness of the Authority's small business program and increase the diversity of firms that choose to participate in our bidding opportunities.

We also continue to partner with the Authority's Office of Strategic Communications to publicize these trainings, as well as bidding opportunities and other activities using a combination of methods including our Connect HSR vendor registry, Authority-hosted pre-bid industry forums, the Small Business Website, through e-blasts, fact sheets, social media, participation at small business outreach events, this newsletter and surveys.

On the coordination front, we continue to seek to cultivate partnerships with resources partners and collaborative work groups to increase promotion and training. This includes Meet the Primes events and open-houses and matchmaking events with our prime contractors virtually and throughout the state.

And finally, we are committed to offering assistance, guidance and support to internal and external stakeholders with questions, concerns, issues and complaints pertaining to small businesses. That's one of my most important roles as the Authority's Small Business Advocate. I am here to assist small businesses with their pursuit of contract opportunities, I'm here to answer their questions and me and my team are committed to providing outreach, engagement and supportive services to the small business community.

As we look ahead for 2023, I just want to say thanks to my wonderful team that is helping to get the word out about how small businesses can be part of this historic project. We do have a 30 percent small business participation goal to meet for our contracts, and to meet that goal, it takes a tremendous effort for everyone. And to all of you in the small business community, I say thanks for your continued support and I look forward to working with you all this year and beyond.

# Small Business Events

**March 16, 2023**  
**California High-Speed Rail**  
**Authority Board Meeting**  
 Time TBD  
 Sacramento (specific site TBD)

**March 23, 2023**  
[Business Advisory Council](#)  
 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
 Via Zoom  
 Small Business Program staff will host the business advisory council meeting and talk about high-speed rail progress among other topics.

**April 20, 2023**  
**California High-Speed Rail**  
**Authority Board Meeting**  
 Time TBD  
 Sacramento (Specific site TBD)

**May 24, 2023**  
**Business Advisory Council**  
 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
 Via Zoom



**CONNECTHSR**  
 High-Speed Rail Vendor Registry

**Interested in doing  
 business with  
 High-Speed Rail?**

Visit  
[www.ConnectHSR.com](http://www.ConnectHSR.com)



**February 28, 2023**

[High-speed Rail Meet the Prime Workshop – Construction Package 2-3](#)  
 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
 Via Zoom

The purpose of the workshop is to provide an overview of the HSR SB Program and provide information about how small businesses can get involved

**March 7, 2023**

[High-Speed Rail Women in Construction 2023 Workshop](#)  
 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.  
 Via Zoom

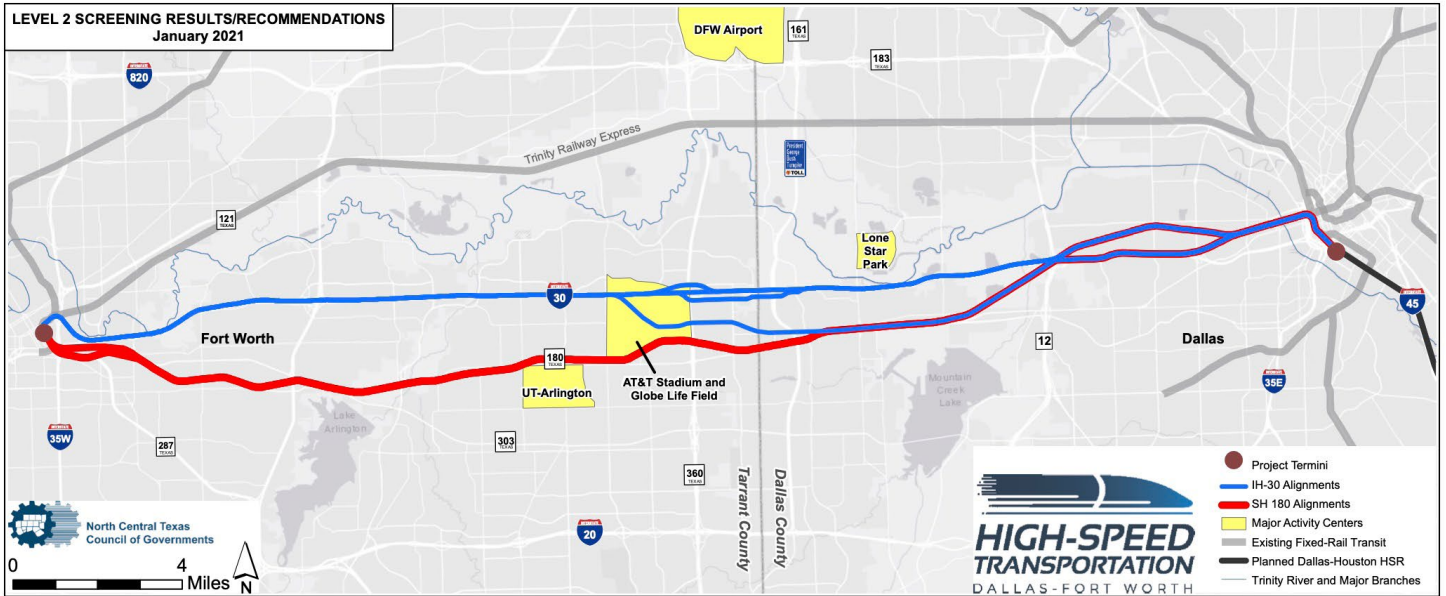
Authority staff will attend the Norcal APEX-Accelerator's Virtual Women in Construction Week 2023 workshop and serve on a panel discussing the Authority's small business program

**March 30, 2023**

[High-Speed Rail Meet the Prime Workshop – Early Train Operator](#)  
 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
 Via Zoom

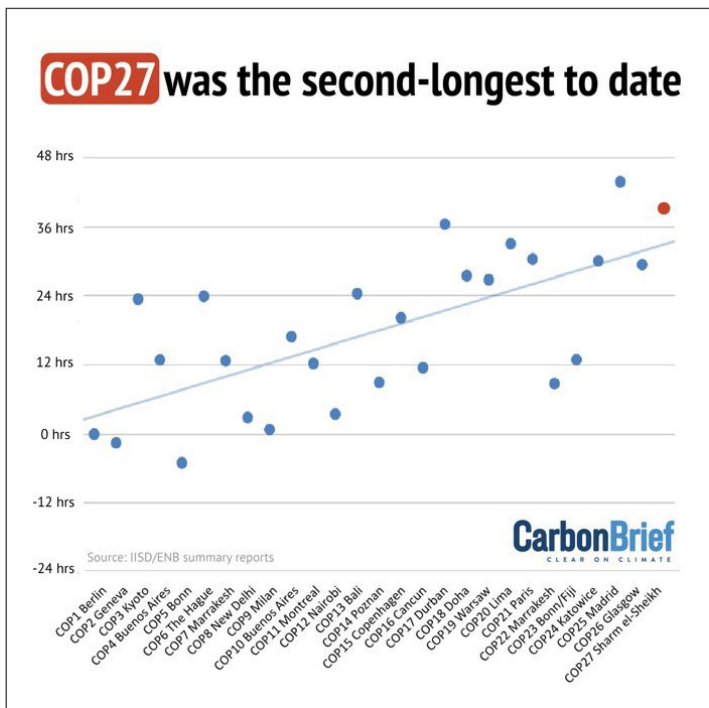
The goal of the workshop is to increase Small Business participation for the Early Train Operator

# Speedreads



## DALLAS-FORT WORTH HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT BEGINS ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

The North Central Texas Council of Governments has initiated an environmental study in part of a larger project analysis for the development of a high-speed rail in Texas. [The Council first began project analysis in 2020 with a goal to connect the Dallas-Fort Worth area to two other proposed high-speed rail projects: the Dallas to Houston and the Fort Worth to Laredo high-speed connections.](#) Since its start, the Council has hosted more than 180 meetings between the public, government agencies, elected officials and community organizations. The environmental study is expected to take two years to complete. (Photo Courtesy of the North Central Texas Council of Governments)



## COP27: KEY OUTCOMES AGREED AT THE UN CLIMATE TALKS IN SHARM EL-SHEIKH

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) Climate Summit in 2022 was the second most attended COP of all time and ran long as the many parties attending attempted to secure consensus on tackling climate change. [Host country Egypt made the goal of the summit to be implementation: putting plans for tackling climate change into action.](#) There were many discussions about how to implement pledges from previous summits and hold people accountable, against the background of protesters being allowed to march inside the venue for the first time in UN history. [Newer topics took the center stage including sustainable agriculture, the ocean's role in climate change, indigenous peoples and local communities and several Africa-based initiatives.](#)



## FLIGHT-FREE TRAVEL WILL BECOME EASIER IN PORTUGAL DUE TO NEW HIGH-SPEED RAIL ROUTES

In efforts to increase rail travel and become carbon neutral by 2045, Portugal's Infrastructure Minister Pedro Nuno Santos has announced the country's plans to update its rail system. [The plan would link the 10 largest cities in Portugal and create a third crossing over the Tagus River in the Lisbon region.](#) Additionally, the new trains would cut travel time between Lisbon and Porto by half, making the trip only about 1 hour and 25 minutes. (Image courtesy of Liz Hafalia/ San Francisco Chronicle)



## SAUDI ARABIA'S "THE LINE" IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Trucks and heavy machinery have taken to Saudi Arabia's desert in the start of the country's \$500 billion series of projects aimed at the creation of a futuristic city named Neom. ["The Line," which has been called a "utopian fantasy," promises a chain of linear communities built within Neom where services are provided by artificial intelligence.](#) This mega-project is expected to be 160,934 meters long, 500 meters tall, and 200 meters wide and powered by 100% renewable energy. (Image courtesy of Dezeen/YouTube)



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION APPROVES FRANCE'S PLAN TO BAN SHORT-HAUL DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

After a formal review that began in 2021, the European Commission has approved France's proposal to ban domestic flights between cities linked by a train ride of less than two and a half hours. [According to EU statistics, 17 of the 20 busiest air routes in Europe cover less than 434 miles, which can be replaced with faster, cleaner, and more sustainable intercity trains.](#) France's plan comes in accordance with its Climate Law to reduce carbon emissions. The ban would abolish flights between the Paris Orly Airport and Nantes, Lyon and Bordeaux with the possibility of a ban expansion after three years. (Photo Courtesy of Philippe Lopez/Getty Images)

# Engineering Strong Partnerships



(L-R): VST Engineering Chief Sales & Marketing Officer Dominic Tafoya, Chief Executive Officer Anthony Valdiosera and Chief Operations Officer Michael Stanwick; (top right): Onsite in the Central Valley, location unknown; (bottom right, L-R): VST Engineering Chief Operations Officer Michael Stanwick, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer Dominic Tafoya and Chief Executive Officer Anthony Valdiosera

**S**trong partnerships are critical to the success of large infrastructure projects. Contractors, architects and engineers must work together to ensure successful delivery.

An excellent example of a strong partner is Oakland-based [VST Engineering](#). A certified Small Business/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, the firm specializes in railway, highway & roadway, structural and general civil design for the transportation sector.

Founded by three engineers, VST Engineering has an inspiring origin story. "Back in 2011, I was out in Utah on the I-15 CORE design-build," said Chief Sales & Marketing Officer Dominic Tafoya. "As the project wrapped up, I expressed interest in going to California, and a colleague told me a couple of his coworkers were looking to transfer from Sacramento to Oakland." At the time, little did Tafoya know that the two transferring were his future business partners, Anthony Valdiosera and Michael Stanwick, now VST's Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer, respectively. Tafoya was hired for one of the roles and moved to Sacramento. "I ended up picking up a couple of their projects and only talked to them on the phone once or twice," said Tafoya.

The following year, Tafoya's colleague brought the trio together again. "I took an interview in San Francisco and little did I know, Michael and Anthony also interviewed. We each accepted offers and met in person for the first time our first week in the office," said Tafoya. "None of us could resist the prospect of performing preliminary design for California High-Speed Rail."

Valdiosera and Stanwick focused on railway design for the next few years, while Tafoya worked on road and highway design. "We ended up collaborating, working long nights to meet deadlines," said Stanwick, "when we would look around the office late at night, it would often just be the three of us."

"We talked off and on about starting our own business, our desire to create something special," said Valdiosera. Careers took them on separate paths before they could make the business a reality. Valdiosera kept the dream in sight, and as the transportation industry entered a period of growth, he reconnected with Stanwick, and they both approached Tafoya to formalize the partnership. "Then finally, in 2018, we said let's go for it, let's do it, and we turned on the lights and hit the ground running," said Tafoya.



# "Our goal of connecting and advocating for our communities will continue to drive the quality of our services." - Michael Stanwick, Chief Operations Officer, VST Engineering

"We had the classic startup story, starting in my garage," said Valdiosera. Since then, the co-founders attribute much growth to the California High-Speed Rail Authority. In 2019, VST Engineering joined the Rail Delivery Partner team, providing technical engineering support in the Central Valley. "We reported to each of the Construction Package project offices and made ourselves available to resolve any technical issues impeding design approvals," said Valdiosera. The hard work resulted in a measured increase in construction activity, which led the Authority to turn to VST for additional support within the Engineering Services Branch. Today, the company has 13 employees and has relocated from the garage to its new headquarters in Oakland.

"We're building a full-service civil engineering firm and look forward to continuing our partnership with California High-Speed Rail," said Stanwick. "As we expand, our goal of connecting and advocating for our communities will continue to drive the quality of our services."

Anthony Lopez



VST Engineering Team (L-R): Chief Sales & Marketing Officer Dominic Tafoya, Senior Structural Engineer Chris Ingle, Engineering Intern Eduardo Solorio, Administrative Assistant Andrea Valdiosera Track and Roadway Engineer Yuma Doi, Senior Hydraulics Engineer Elena Lasheras, Marketing/Social Media Manager Lucero Cendejas-Tafoya, Chief Operations Officer Michael Stanwick and Chief Executive Officer Anthony Valdiosera



VST Engineering Co-Founders in the original garage. (L-R) Chief Executive Officer Anthony Valdiosera, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer Dominic Tafoya and Chief Operations Officer Michael Stanwick

# A Family Company Serving the Central Valley



Pacific Boring has been instrumental in the relocation of utilities that need to be removed from the path of the high-speed rail alignment in the Central Valley.

Since 1982, [Pacific Boring Inc.](#) has completed thousands of projects in tunneling, pipe jacking and horizontal auger boring services. Among these include several projects working with the California High-Speed Rail Authority in the Central Valley.

From humble beginnings, Pacific Boring was founded by three lifelong friends, James Garner, David Cline and Calistro Terrasa in Caruthers, California. Two of them, James Garner and David Cline, are still actively involved with the company today.

“We have specialized in horizontal drilling since the very beginning. This is what we did in 1982 and this is what we do now, 40 years later,” explained Steven Gallyer, the President of Pacific Boring.

Steven began working with Pacific Boring right after graduating from high school. He started off as a shop helper performing miscellaneous tasks as he went to school. His mentor David Cline encouraged him to attend Fresno State and pursue a degree in

business. That became a reality when Gallyer graduated in 2007. Upon graduating, he worked full-time as a project manager and eventually became president of the company in 2022.

“We work all over the western United States, which requires a significant amount of travel. A majority of our work is in bigger metropolitan areas like the Bay Area or southern California,” said Steven. “Since we specialize in the trenchless installation of utilities, we are unique in that way. We can provide and meet this specific need, especially with large-scale projects like the California High-Speed Rail project in the Central Valley.”

With an extensive fleet of specialized hauling equipment and technical experience, Pacific Boring has been instrumental in the relocation of utilities that need to be removed from the path of the high-speed rail alignment. No job is too big or small for this determined company.

“The project has called for utilities to be relocated because you can’t just open trench across the highway or existing railroad tracks.

**"We are grateful to be working on the high-speed rail project. As I mentioned previously, we still must travel across the state and other regions, but high-speed rail has provided us the opportunity to work here locally. We appreciate that we get to work near home, especially since our crews have families."**

- Steven Gallyer, President, Pacific Boring

We tunnel under these facilities to relocate existing or install new facilities as needed for the construction of the high-speed rail," added Gallyer.

The high-speed rail project has more than a thousand utility relocations, which can range from PG&E poles, AT&T lines, to irrigation lines. One example is Pacific Boring's tunneling work, which included an irrigation relocation at the South Avenue Grade Separation in Fresno County. Pacific Boring installed two 90-inch steel casings beneath the future high-speed rail and BNSF railroad tracks. This new irrigation realignment proved helpful for the farmers in the area. With this crucial step in the construction phase, crews worked on the construction of the South Avenue grade separation, which was opened to traffic in February 2022.

Gallyer said, "We are grateful to be working on the high-speed rail project. As I mentioned previously, we still must travel across the state and other regions, but high-speed rail has provided us the opportunity to work here locally. We appreciate that we get to work near home, especially since our crews have families."

Located only miles away from high-speed rail construction, Pacific Boring is ready to mobilize at a moment's notice.

"The high-speed rail project is good because it provides opportunities for companies like ours. I support it because it supports our employees. The project supports businesses like ours and provides opportunities that are close to home," said Gallyer.

Ramiro Diaz



The high-speed rail project has more than a thousand utility relocations, which can range from PG&E poles, AT&T lines, to irrigation lines



# Drilling Down in the Central Valley



In June 2022, crews from Gregg conducted geotechnical drilling with mud rotary methods and Standard Penetration Testing (SPT) sampling. (Central Valley) Lead driller: Sam Gutierrez, Assistant driller: Martin Chavez

**1** 985, the year of the memorable Chicago Bears defense, the release of the first-ever PC Windows operating system, and the year the world would see the debuts of some superstars, like Jerry Rice, Mike Tyson and Whitney Houston. Surely, there must have been something in the water that year. John Gregg, then an Engineering Geologist working in California, got a sip of it.

Based in both Southern and Northern regions of California, the 100% Native American owned [Gregg Drilling](#) (Gregg) has been serving the Golden State for nearly 4 decades. Over the last 38 years, the federal and state certified disadvantaged business has also worked on projects with key transportation agencies within the state, such as Caltrans, Metro and BART.

“Gregg Drilling was established in 1985 to serve the environmental drilling industry as a safe and reliable option to site investigation

services,” says Gregg Drilling Technical Director Kelly Cabal. Since its inception, Gregg has become widely recognized as a leader and innovator in subsurface investigation – tapping into geotechnical and marine site investigations over the years.

With a client list consisting of government agencies, industrial owners, engineering consulting firms and construction firms, Gregg prides itself on excellent service, efficient performance and a high standard of safety.

“Working in the regulatory environment present in California is always a challenge,” says Cabal. “Many of Gregg’s projects require specialized training and certifications to access refineries, military bases and environmentally sensitive sites.”

When it comes to its role on the nation’s first high-speed rail project, Gregg began its investigation services in 2016 working

with various clients as part of Construction Package 2-3 in the Central Valley. “Most of the work has involved cone penetration testing (CPT), where a small electronic probe is pushed into the ground to determine the strength properties of the soil,” Cabal said. Gregg provides this crucial data to assist the engineers and designers with liquefaction analysis and foundation design.

The work didn’t stop there. In 2018, Pitcher Services, Gregg’s sister company, started providing investigation services on the project as well. Pitcher Services specializes in geotechnical site investigations and working with AECOM and Jacobs; they’ve drilled 200 borings ranging between 30 and 500 feet.

Deeper borings involve geotechnical sampling and downhole suspension logging, processes used to assess the properties of the



Tremie Pipe is used to grout up the completed boreholes created by Gregg Drilling crews in June 2022 working on the Shafter to Bakersfield stretch of the alignment in the Central Valley. Lead driller: Sam Gutierrez, Assistant driller: Martin Chavez

**"We are proud to contribute to this important green project in California, reducing greenhouse gasses and promoting public transport and access across our beautiful state."** - Kelly Cabal, Drilling Technical Director, Gregg Drilling



Kelly Cabal, Technical Director



Technical Director Kelly Cabal addresses a group of engineers, geologists and field techs during Gregg Drilling's 2022 Field Day Training event in Signal Hill, California

soil, and the measurement of seismic wave velocity profiles. Gregg and Pitcher utilize monitoring wells to analyze groundwater, test for contamination and ecosystem analysis. Together, these processes, as part of Gregg and Pitcher's site investigations, are crucial to assist design-build contractors with foundation design and earthquake liquefaction mitigation data points.

To date, 95% of Gregg's drilling has been completed with just a few monitoring wells and borings remaining at various site investigations along the alignment from Fresno to Tulare County. Gregg hopes to continue their work on the project as additional sections along the alignment are released. Cabal adds, "We are proud to contribute to this important green project in

California, reducing greenhouse gasses and promoting public transport and access across our beautiful state."

Beyond the nation's first high-speed rail project, Gregg will continue to provide their site investigation expertise to the western United States on land and in deep waters. Purchased by Sealaska in 2018, Cabal says Gregg is excited to have aligned with a company with the same values of "For People, For Planet", a partnership that has led to site investigations for offshore wind solutions to assist with the expansion of ports, harbors and existing transmission infrastructure.

Gregg is positioned to grow and continue to provide the best site investigations worldwide. Cabal states, "[We] will be able to use this project as a reference for work and contracts demonstrating our ability to comply with strict safety requirements and handle larger contracts".

Gregg looks forward to a future where they are part of the solution to our climate crisis through positive improvements in energy infrastructure and green economy. Their 38-year presence in the industry is not a result of luck or a sip of water in 1985, but their commitment to exceeding the standard they've set in the drilling industry, along with the relentless pursuit of one simple goal: to provide clients with high-quality, innovative services performed in a safe, timely and cost-effective manner.

Anthony Stijepovic



# Ed Duarte - Empowering the Next Generation of Business Owners



Aztec Consultants is a family-owned business. Ed Duarte restarted the family business in 1986 to continue the family legacy in the San Ramon area.

**E**d Duarte - husband, father, grandfather, business owner, mentor, business coach - is a legend to the construction business community in San Ramon and the surrounding areas.

Ed's father and uncle founded Duarte and Duarte Construction in 1950. That's when Ed found himself learning the business and construction trade.

"I have literally always been in the construction industry," says Ed

At the young age of 17, Ed started working summers for Caltrans as an engineering student trainee while finishing his high school education. He then spent seven more years at Caltrans while earning his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Fresno State. Working as a civil engineer prepared him for the next chapter in his life, taking over the family business.

In 1969, Ed left Caltrans to go to work for his father in the family business. Later, in 1974, Ed and his brother took over the family business when his father retired. In 1980, he moved to the Bay Area and took a break from the family business. And finally, in 1986, Ed restarted the company, rebranded it as [Aztec Consultants](#) and continued the family legacy.

Since founding Aztec, the firm has built hundreds of construction projects throughout California as a Prime Contractor, specializing in public works. The company has built nearly \$400 million of public works construction contracts for such agencies as Caltrans, Port of Oakland, the Oakland Zoo, EBMUD and dozens of municipalities, cities, counties and various school districts.

After running the company for 30 years, it was time to pass along the company to the next generation. In 2016, Ed sold the firm to his son Frank and son-in-law Chris DeVette. Together they have taken the company to the next level.

Since business runs in his veins, there was no stopping Ed from continuing to work. With Aztec Consultants now in the hands of his son and son-in-law, Ed was ready for the next chapter in his life.

Today, Ed serves as a Construction / Public Works Specialist at NorCal Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). He spends his days mentoring and guiding emerging, ambitious business owners eager to enter the construction business sector, specifically those interested in public works projects.

**"Running a construction business in California is not easy...there are many sacrifices one makes, such as working 60+ hour weeks, sacrificing time with family. You have to put in your all, there is no downtime." - Ed Duarte, Owner, Aztec Consultants**



Aztec, the firm has built hundreds of construction projects throughout California as a Prime Contractor, specializing in public works. The company has built nearly \$400 million of public works construction contracts for such agencies as Caltrans, Port of Oakland, the Oakland Zoo, EBMUD and dozens of municipalities, cities, counties and various school districts.

He teaches them the ropes from getting certified, to the process of how to bid for contracts, landing a contract and managing one. The list is extensive of what Ed teaches his mentees.

His passion is helping ambitious entrepreneurs land contracts in public works entities, such as the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Over the last two decades, Ed has given more than 200+ presentations on Estimating, Bidding and Project Management in-person and virtually.

Among the many words of advice Ed gives, he says, "Don't go after contracts beyond your capabilities - start small, be prepared, and ground yourself."

Among the dozens of entrepreneurs Ed has mentored along the way, he remembers one story in particular. Two young men were eager to learn to become business owners. They attended numerous classes and were persistent. Their hard work and dedication landed them a BART contract.

"Running a construction business in California is not easy," says

Ed. "There are many sacrifices one makes, such as working 60+ hour weeks, sacrificing time with family. You have to put in your all, there is no downtime."

When Ed is not working, he enjoys time with family. For the past 40 years, Ed has lived in San Ramon with his wife Linda. Between both of them, they have four adult children, three adult grandchildren and one great-grandson. In his free time, he enjoys boating, traveling, and music from the '40's through the '80's'.

Sofia Gutierrez

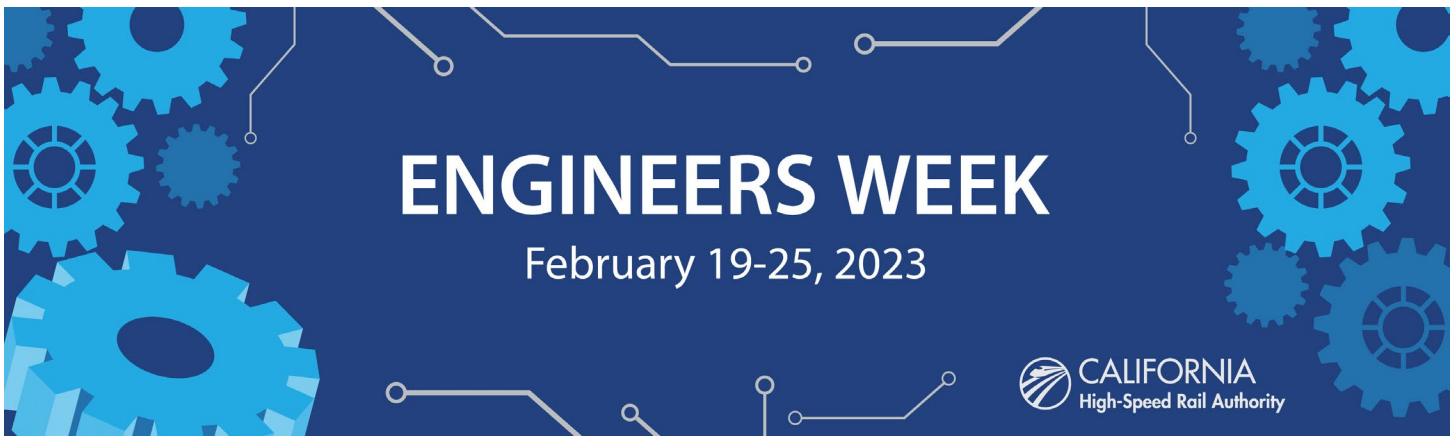


# Cultural Awareness Months



The Authority is recognizing Cultural Awareness Months in 2023, and we're kicking off February by celebrating Black History Month. We will highlight our dedicated employees as they share their thoughts on the celebration and high-speed rail's mission. We will be posting these stories on our social media accounts. Looking forward to March, we will be recognizing Women's History Month and Irish American Heritage Month.

# Engineers Week



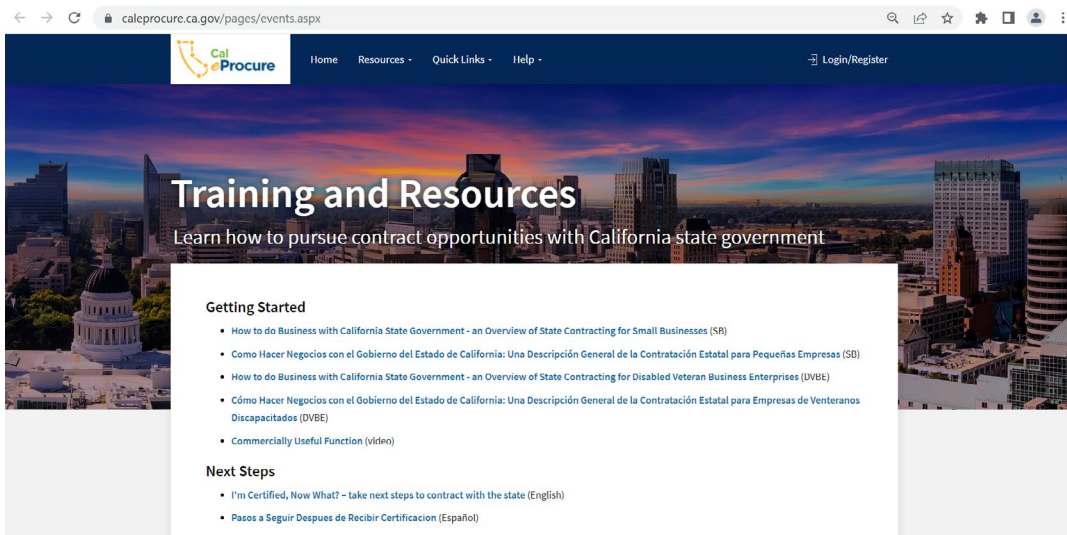
Building the nation's first high-speed rail system is not possible without the men and women that work on this project day in and day out. The Authority is celebrating Engineers Week which starts on February 19 and runs through February 25. We want to thank all of the engineers that work on this project and the small businesses that provide engineering services. Be sure to keep an eye on our social media accounts over the week for events.



# Small Business Certification Resources at Your Fingertips

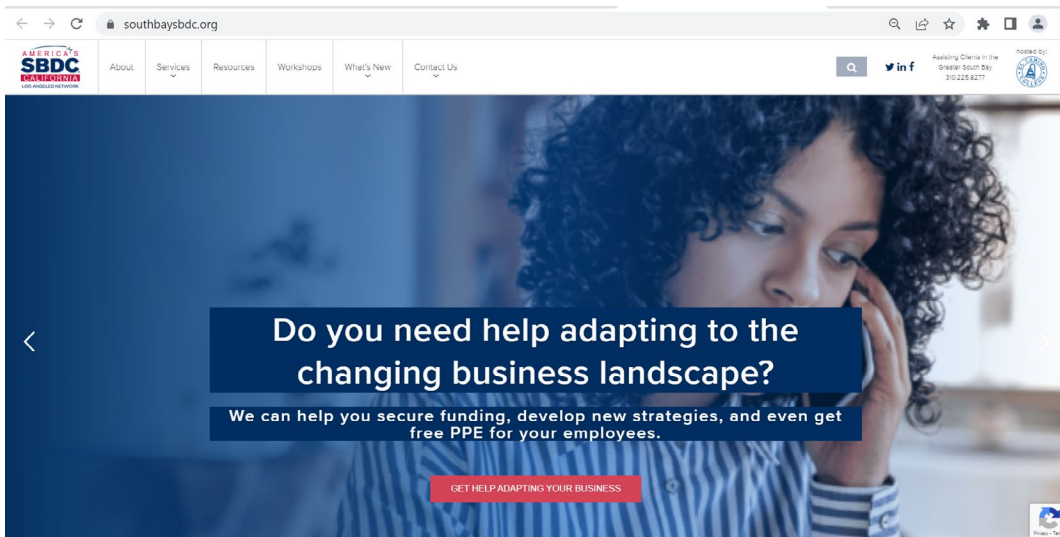
## Want to Get Certified as a Small Business?

Are you or do you know of a small business in California who needs to get certified to work with the state. At the Authority, we have been fielding a lot of questions for people who want to learn more. The Department of General Services Small Business team and their [Training & Resources](#) page contains a variety of information items, including videos on: Overview of the State Contracting for Small Businesses, Overview of the State Contracting for DVBEs, I'm Certified, Now What?, and several more.

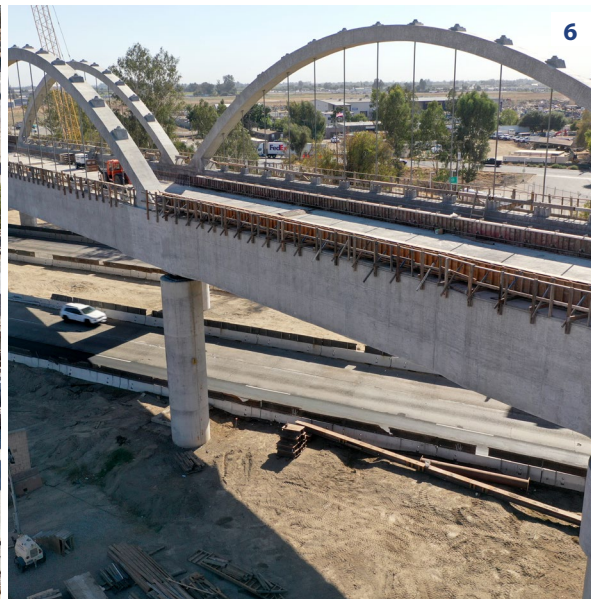


## Helping Businesses Succeed at Every Step of the Way

The California High-Speed Rail Authority [Small Business Program along with Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\), Los Angeles Network](#). The SBDC is a national program with over 1,000 locations across the country and they help to stimulate economic growth through business advising and development. SBDC offers no-cost business consulting, training, and resources to local small businesses through funding provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and from the California Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development (Go-Biz).



# Cedar Viaduct



1. The Cedar Viaduct is one of our largest structures in the Central Valley, spanning over 3,700 feet long (September 29, 2022)
2. The structure is located from Golden State Boulevard to west of State Route 99 in south Fresno. (September 29, 2022)
3. The Cedar Viaduct will carry high-speed trains over State Route 99, North and Cedar avenues. (September 29, 2022)
4. 40 pre-cast concrete girders were required to support the superstructure of the Cedar Viaduct. (September 29, 2022)
5. The structure's distinctive cast-in-place arches act as a suspension bridge support for the bridge deck. (September 29, 2022)
6. Each arch on the Cedar Viaduct is nearly 179 feet long and nearly 40 feet tall. (September 29, 2022)



# PROGRESS IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

LATEST VIDEOS: [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEEDRAIL](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEEDRAIL)



On December 21, the Authority, in collaboration with Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV), opened the Fowler Avenue grade separation, located between Elkhorn and Davis avenues in Fresno County. This grade separation spans 299 feet, is 40 feet wide and will take traffic over the future high-speed rail lines. The structure is comprised of 12 pre-cast concrete girders manufactured at the DFJV Pre-Cast Girder Facility in Hanford.



On December 20, the Authority, in collaboration with Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV), opened the roadway at the Cairo Avenue Viaduct. The structure is located between Eighth and Ninth avenues in Kings County and will take high-speed trains over Cairo Avenue. It spans 84 feet long and more than 43 feet wide and is built to accommodate two sets of tracks for future high-speed trains.



On December 20, the Authority, in collaboration with Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV), opened the Adams Avenue grade separation located between Cedar and Maple avenues, south of the City of Fresno. The grade separation spans 357 feet long, is 40 feet wide and takes traffic over the existing BNSF and future high-speed rail lines.



On December 20, the Authority, in partnership with the Fresno Arts Council, Chinatown Fresno Foundation, and the City of Fresno, unveiled a new mural today in Fresno's Chinatown along China Alley. The new mural represents and pays homage to the rich and historic past of Fresno's Chinatown, while looking toward the future of building the nation's first high-speed rail system. The mural is located on China Alley and Tulare Street, next to a high-speed rail underpass currently under construction and steps from the future Fresno Station. The mural was spearheaded by local artist Mauro Carrera with the assistance of artists Sara Sandoval and Rigoberto Garcia.