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Catrina's Corner

Catrina Blair Small Business Advocate



Small Business Issues: Who Can I Turn To?

By Katrina Blair

People often ask me exactly what I do as the Small Business Advocate. Well, on any given day, I serve as a sounding board, resource, cheerleader, Pied Piper, wakeup call, molder, fixer and more. Everything I do is focused on getting small business on board the high-speed rail project by implementing all aspects of the **Authority's Small Business and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program**. To get the job done, I make sure the Authority complies with myriad state and federal statutes.

Joining me in this enormous task are dedicated members of the Small Business

"Everything I do is focused on getting small business on board the high-speed rail project by implementing all aspects of the Authority's Small Business Program."

Catrina Blair
Small Business Advocate
California High-Speed Rail Authority

Investing in California Small Businesses

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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/

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To view past newsletters visit:

https://hsr.ca.gov/small_business/newsletter.aspx

Catrina's Corner

Catrina Blair Small Business Advocate



Program team. Together, we continually seek new approaches to improve policies, eliminate barriers and increase small business utilization among small, disadvantaged and disabled-veteran business enterprises (SB/DBE/DVBE).

Community engagement is an essential component of our outreach strategy. We host events such as "Meet the Primes," which includes Small Business Liaison Officers for our design-build teams, rail delivery partner and prime contractors. These events help us educate attendees about the high-speed rail program and meet directly with small businesses. Companies find out about current and upcoming contract procurement opportunities and get tips on how to improve their bids. Small businesses also have an opportunity to talk to other companies and our resource partners such as state agencies, contractors and non-profit groups who help small businesses navigate the world of government contracting.

This fall, we plan to give you another helping hand with a Supportive Services Symposium in the Central Valley. It will be the first event of its kind offered by the Authority. The purpose will be to acquaint SB/DBE/DVBEs with local and statewide organizations that focus on providing supportive services for small businesses. Keep an eye out for additional details about the symposium, which will be here before you know it.

Small businesses can stay in touch with us and find out more about the high-speed rail project by registering with our vendor

registry, ConnectHSR. Registered firms receive notifications of high-speed rail procurement opportunities and business-focused events such as the upcoming Supportive Services Symposium, Pre-Bids, Meet the Primes events, small business workshops and training sessions.

Government contracting requires plowing through and filling out volumes of paperwork. Firms must figure out if they have the right skills, certification, licenses, insurance and enough money on hand to get in the game. In this edition of the Small Business Newsletter, we'll introduce you to California Capital Financial Development Corporation and its branches, which includes a Procurement Technical Assistance Center. The one-stop shop operation has been helping small businesses succeed for nearly four decades.

Be sure to check out our Small Business Program Page, which features our newly developed Small Business Intake Form - a way for small businesses to bring concerns, disputes and other matters to my attention.

You can get a closer look at our progress and plans for high-speed rail by reading the 2019 Project Update Report .

Lastly, take note of the theme of this newsletter - sustainable operations and all things green (as in green practices). It goes hand-in-hand with the high-speed rail project, which is committed to reducing greenhouse gases, minimizing impacts to land and improving the environment.

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 Enterprises (DBEs), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBEs) and Micro-Businesses (MBs).

Go, Meet, Greet: Small Business Events

August 13, 2019

Business Advisory Council Meeting

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Department of General Services
707 3rd Street
West Sacramento, CA 95605

September 4, 2019

Central Region Calmentor Meeting

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Caltrans District 6
2015 E. Shields Ave. Suite #100
Fresno, CA 93726



October 23, 2019

Small Business Supportive Services Symposium

8:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Bitwise Industries
700 Van Ness Avenue
Fresno, CA 93721

Hosted by the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the symposium will offer small businesses information financing, bonding, insurance and information on how to become contract ready. Come to learn, find resources and connect with other small businesses.



August 16, 2019

California Black Chamber of Commerce Ron Brown/Aubry Stone Memorial Business Economic Conference

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Hilton Sacramento Arden West
2200 Harvard Street
Sacramento, CA

2019 will mark the 25th anniversary of the California Black Chamber of Commerce. While celebrating the chamber's silver legacy, entrepreneurs and youth can also network with each other, learn how to improve business and economic opportunities, and join the ranks of some 2 million Black-owned businesses in the U.S.

September 17, 2019

California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting

San Jose, CA
Time & Place: TBD

November 12, 2019

Business Advisory Council Meeting

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Department of General Services
707 3rd Street
West Sacramento, CA 95605

October 15, 2019

California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting

Time & Place: TBD



Business Advisory Council: (left to right) Debbie Hunsaker-Fresno Chamber of Commerce, Jesus Vargas-Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Lee Cunningham-Women Construction Owners and Executives, Arvin Chaudhary-American Council of Engineering Companies, Nick Hill-Kern Minority Contractors Assoc, Patrick Sauls-Elite Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned SB Network, Esther Shaw-SB Summit Group, Inc, Linden Nishinaga-Asian American Architects and Engineers Assoc-Socal, Walter Allen-Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Rebecca Robison-U.S. Veteran Business Alliance.

Not pictured: Adam Holt-American Indian Chamber of Commerce of California, Eddy Lau-Asian American Architects and Engineers, Jay King-California Black Chamber of Commerce, Pete Varma-National Assoc. of Minority Contractors, Fred Jordan-San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce, Shari Tavafrashti-Women's Transportation Seminar

West Coast Arborists Helps Offset Construction Emissions One Tree at a Time

The enthusiasm and smiles were infectious as more than 100 community members swarmed Glendale's Verdugo Park. Young people, retirees, scouts and parents with kids gathered in March to plant trees with skills recently learned in an urban forestry workshop.

The volunteers are on the frontline of a movement to improve the environment and cancel out construction-related emissions related to building the nation's first high-speed rail system. Those efforts are blooming, thanks in part to committed companies like **West Coast Arborists, Inc. (WCA, Inc.)**, an Anaheim-based family-owned tree maintenance and management company doing its part to strengthen communities — one tree at a time.

From October 2018 to the end of planting season in May, WCA, Inc. arborists and volunteers **hosted 21 tree planting events** or workshops in primarily low-income and disadvantaged California communities near the

future high-speed rail alignment.

"The goal is to offset some of the emissions that will take place during the development of the high-speed rail system," explained WCA, Inc. Grant Coordinator David Pineda.

"The goal is to offset some of the emissions that will take place during the development of the high-speed rail system."

David Pineda
Grant Coordinator
West Coast Arborists, Inc.



1. A staff member from West Coast Arborists teaches a team of more than 100 volunteers the do's and don'ts of planting trees at Glendale's Verdugo Park.
2. Cullen Davis, a graphic designer for the high-speed rail project, joined volunteers getting their hands dirty while they planted 40 trees.



Along with improving air quality, the trees will reduce storm runoff and provide energy savings. Several young people who took in the Glendale event also received job training. “The best part is bringing an experience with urban forestry to young people,” Pineda said.

The planting program is funded in part by a \$2.5 million grant from the **California High-Speed Rail Authority’s Urban Forestry Program**. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) administered the funds and awarded them to two non-profits. The first million went to Tree Fresno to plant 2,400 trees in schools, parks, and residential areas in the Fresno area. The remaining \$1.5 million was awarded to the **California Urban Forests Council Initiative** to Reduce Carbon and Limit Emissions (CIRCLE 3.0) to plant 4,000 trees - half in public areas and half in residential areas.

Of the money that went to CIRCLE 3.0, about \$1 million has been committed to WCA, Inc. Pineda said they sweetened the pot by kicking in a \$350,000 match.

“Our firm is dedicated to creating green infrastructure that is sustainable,” he said.

So far, WCA, Inc. has helped plant 2,500 trees. The tally includes what Pineda calls well-adapted tree species such as Coast Live Oak, Indian Rosewood, Chinese Pistache, Brisbane Box and Australian Willow. “Additional trees were planted for both residents and cities. We hope to continue to be able to contribute to the success of urban forestry projects and, as a result, create sustainable communities,” Pineda said.

Micah Flores

1. & 2. Two hundred trees are slated to be planted at Glendale’s Verdugo Park. The trees were selected for the ability to reduce air pollution and provide shade. When mature, they will remove 6.4 tons of CO₂ and 1,500 lbs. of pollutants every year.

3. The planting program is funded in part by a \$2.5 million grant from the California High-Speed Rail Authority. West Coast Arborists added about \$350,000 for the tree planting program.



Did You Know?

Are you a business with a question, concern, dispute or comment? Check out our new Small Businesses Intake Form. It was designed for small businesses to bring matters to the attention of the Authority's Small Business Advocate. The Small Business Intake Form can be used for a variety of issues:

- Appeal decisions made by the Authority;
- Investigate issues with an Authority contractor;
- Report concerns regarding payment;
- Escalate concerns regarding small business utilization;
- Request general Small Business Program information

When members of the Small Business Team receive the form, they will process, investigate and make sure every effort is made to resolve any issues stated on the form.

The **Small Business Intake Form** is available 24 hours a day and can be found at https://hsr.ca.gov/small_business/intake_form.aspx



Virgin Trains USA (formerly Brightline):

Virgin Trains construction is chugging along in Florida. Work has begun on a 170-mile **extension** from Orlando to West Palm Beach. It's believed the project will generate more than 10,000 jobs and \$650 million in tax revenue. It's expected to be completed in 2021.

(Photo courtesy of Brightline/Virgin Trains USA)



Amtrak Acela: Trains will pick up speed when Amtrak rolls out new ones on its Acela line in 2021. A factory in New York is assembling the trains which will tilt as they round curves. **Amtrak** said the trains will hold up to 380 passengers and run up to 160 mph. They're expected to shave about 15 minutes off trips between Boston, New York and Washington D. C. They'll also feature high-speed Wi-Fi service and craft beer.

(Photo courtesy of Amtrak)



Texas High-Speed Rail: Texas high-speed rail developers are breathing a sigh of relief. About 100 landowners have tried to stop Texas Central from using eminent domain to acquire property and building high-speed rail service between Dallas and Houston. In May, state lawmakers **scrubbed a budget rider** provision supported by disgruntled property owners. Opponents have vowed to fight on to save their land.

(Photo courtesy of Texas Central)

Creating Firm Foundations for High-Speed Rail

Perhaps the most important thing to do at the beginning of any construction project is create a solid foundation. That's where **Forefront Deep Foundations** comes in. The Newport Beach-based pile driving subcontractor has only been in business for about four years, but is expanding operations around California.

"My partner and I both started with another company doing pile driving," said Forefront Deep Foundations President Jeff Bird. "We saw an opportunity in the market and decided to start our own business."

Many of his current employees also worked with him before. "We took the cream of the crop," Bird said. "Right now, we have about 20 employees, though that varies depending on the amount of work we have."

Bird's certified small business specializes in deep foundation systems, which includes shoring and pile driving. The firm got involved in the high-speed rail project about

a year ago by performing test piles to check soil conditions. Currently, it's working in four different locations for CP 2-3.

Recently, crews began driving precast, prestressed concrete piles, 55 to 57 feet long, into the ground for abutments and piers for an **overcrossing at Excelsior Avenue**. Located near Hanford in Kings County, the structure will eventually carry vehicle traffic over future high-speed trains.

Bird explained pile driving is critical, especially for soils that are subject to liquefaction during an earthquake. That's when soil loses its strength or stiffness and behaves like a liquid. Piles are driven deep into the ground so that they still provide support for a structure even if the soil around them doesn't.

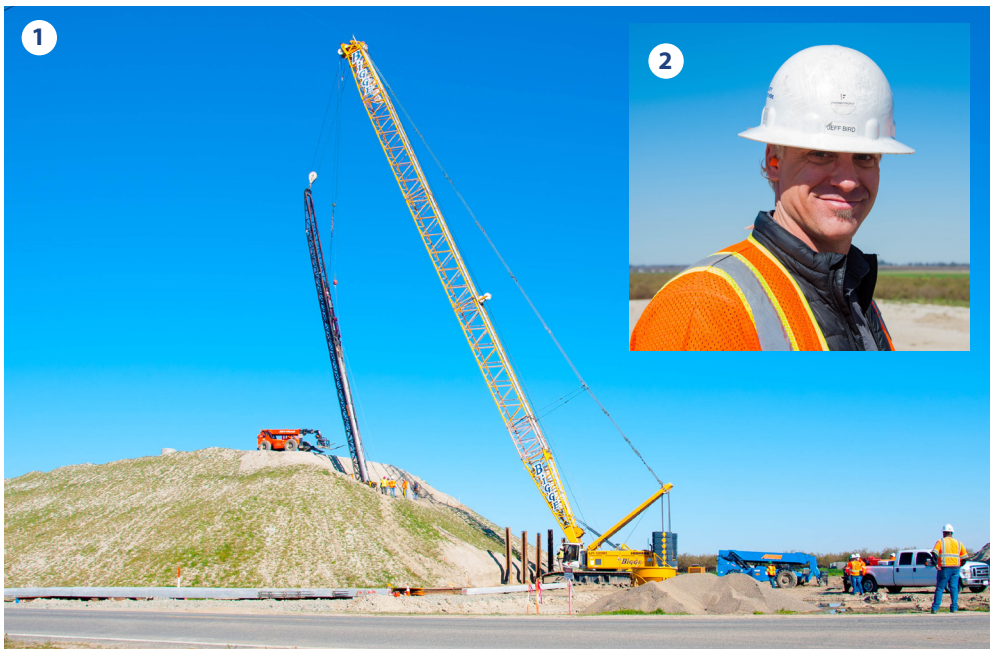
While pile driving may not sound like a "green" activity, the company does its part to reduce its environmental impact. "We use biodegradable vegetable hydraulic oil

in the power unit used to run the drill and auger to avoid any environmental impact in the unlikely event of a spill," Bird said. "All concrete and steel debris from cutting piles after they're installed are transported to a recycling facility, and to limit emissions on the jobsite, engines are turned off instead of idling when they're not in use."

After 17 years in the pile driving business, Bird is glad to be part of building high-speed rail.

"High-speed rail has been a great deal for us," he said. "It's never boring and there's always something different. You're outside, not sitting at a desk all day. And the best part is you get to see the fruits of your labor. And someday we'll be able to tell our kids and grandkids that we worked on this project."

Dan Galvin



1. Forefront Deep Foundations adheres to "green" practices during pile driving activities. The firm uses biodegradable vegetable-based hydraulic fluid to power drills and augers. All concrete and steel debris is transported to a recycling facility and instead of idling, engines are turned off to limit greenhouse emissions.
2. Forefront Deep Foundations President Jeff Bird and a partner opened the company in 2015, and already it's working on four high-speed rail locations in the Central Valley. Recently, his crews started driving concrete piles into the ground for the Excelsior Avenue overcrossing near Hanford in Kings County.

"High-speed rail has been a great deal for us. It's never boring and there's always something different. You're outside, not sitting at a desk all day."

Jeff Bird
President
Forefront Deep Foundations





Danquah Group Makes Its Mark on High-Speed Rail

Even as a child, he had an analytical mind, so friends weren't surprised when Seth Danquah launched his own small business – **Danquah Group, LLC**. He knew it wouldn't be easy, but emboldened by his years of expertise, he set forth on a journey filled with uncertainty.

"As a new business," Danquah recalled, "the challenge was getting clients and getting a consistent flow of work."

As he closes in on the sixth anniversary of the Danquah Group, he can exhale knowing he has solidified his firm's reputation as a professional service company that provides high-level technical, management and administrative services to a host of private and public clients.

"When Danquah was established, we wanted to provide training and management support services to help organizations deliver their strategic initiatives," Danquah said.

"Today, we offer cost management, project controls and management support-service to help architects, managers and others with their capital programs. We help them deliver better performances and better results."

One of the public agencies he's working with is the California High-Speed Rail Authority. His Pleasanton-based firm is

crunching numbers on the project for Wong+Harris, the project and construction management contractor for Construction Package 1 in the Central Valley.

Speaking directly of the work that his two-person firm is doing for high-speed rail, Danquah offered, "We have been providing cost management services, including cost

"We have been providing cost management services, including cost estimating, change-order negotiations and reconciliation, to help manage the cost of the program."

Seth Danquah
Founder/Principal
Danquah Group, LLC



1. Seth Danquah has helped negotiate and reconcile cost estimates for utility relocations on the high-speed rail project and looked at how much it would cost to build berms and walls. His goal is to help clients manage their funds in the most effective and efficient way and deliver a better project.

2. Seth Danquah, owner of Danquah Group, relied on his experience when he opened his cost and risk management business 6 years ago. Before starting out on his own, he spent 10 years as a cost manager, senior estimator and senior project controls manager for much larger companies. Today, he's crunching numbers for Construction Package 1 design-builder Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons.

estimating, change-order negotiations and reconciliation, to help manage the cost of the program.”

Wires, pipes and fiber optics for gas, phones, water and other utilities must be relocated during construction of high-speed rail. Danquah helped negotiate and reconcile cost estimates for utility work with the contractor and looked at how much it would cost to build berms and walls.

While launching a small business can be fraught with unforeseen travails, Danquah said work on high-speed rail has helped his company, which also employs three consultants.

“It has been a major source of revenue for our company and has provided us more experience in the civil and heavy construction market,” Danquah said. “But more importantly, it has given us the confidence to expand our operations if we need to.”

“Working on high-speed rail has its

challenges and rewards, typical of major capital programs. But we are happy to do it and help the program achieve value for money.”

Certified as a Microbusiness (MB) and a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Danquah’s services have grown in demand. The company has worked with various transit programs, providing cost and risk management for Federal Transit Administration funded programs. He has worked on numerous building projects, including aviation, schools, hospitals, clinics and other capital improvement programs.

“These projects come with some unique requirements, assignments and challenges depending on their state of development,” he said. “We’re called upon to offer concept estimates, detailed estimates, risk review and analysis, schedule and schedule review, and third-party estimate reviews.”

Danquah senses that a more promising –

and profitable – future is on the horizon.

“It’s an exciting and opportune time for us as a small business,” he said. “We are pursuing more challenges and looking forward to building our capabilities and competencies in project controls, cost estimating and management, and other support services to help clients deliver their capital improvement programs.”

“We are looking forward to starting a training and development program for others who are interested in project and construction management, leadership and management and other areas to help other small businesses in the industry develop core competencies and capabilities.”

Ricci Graham

Floating Faster in China: High-speed rail officials in China said passengers will feel like they’re floating when they zip along at 372 mph. In May, a prototype for a **high-speed maglev train** rolled off the assembly line. The vehicle is being produced by the state-owned China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC), which is the largest manufacturer of rail transit equipment in the world. The train is expected to go into production in 2021. When it goes into operation, it’s expected to cut the 5.5-hour trip from Shanghai to Beijing to 3.5 hours. Currently, flying a plane between the two cities takes 4.5 hours.



Japan’s Need for More Speed: Japan has started testing a **high-speed Shinkansen train** that’s capable of going 248 mph. The new train, called the **Alfa-X**, will be built by Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Hitachi. The sleek-looking vehicle will feature a 72-foot long aerodynamic nose that’s expected to reduce noise and pressure, especially traveling through tunnels. Testing will be done at night before the train goes into operation in 2030. This train will certainly be speedy, but won’t be the world’s fastest. Right now, that honor belongs to China’s maglev train that’s capable of doing 268 mph. Japan plans to launch a train in 2027 that will go 314 mph.

Purchasing Property for California's Future

"I was told by someone I look up to, 'This will be a rocky road, but a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with some of the brightest minds in transportation,'" said Beth Wilson Hill, an environmental lawyer turned Principal of **Continental Field Service**. She's talking about being part of high-speed rail, the largest infrastructure project in the nation. She took this advice from her mentor with a grain of salt. More than six years later, she's still excited to be part of the project.

To date, Continental Field Service (CFS), a registered Small Business Enterprise and Women's Business Enterprise, has helped purchase more than \$200 million worth of property to make way for California high-speed rail. Her team handles the Authority's most complex and sensitive acquisitions and was one of the first right-of-way consultants on the project.

Fresno-based CFS has more than 50 years of experience in project management, appraisal and appraisal review, title

examination, right-of-way acquisition, residential and commercial relocation, and property management. The company was founded in 1966 by Roy Hill, Beth Wilson Hill's late father-in-law, and is one of the oldest right-of-way firms in the nation.

Working for a project as massive as

"We definitely started the business with much smaller projects. This is the largest infrastructure project we've ever worked on."

Beth Wilson Hill
Principal
Continental Field Service

high-speed rail has proven to be a unique challenge.

"We definitely started the business with much smaller projects," Hill said jokingly when explaining the history of CFS. "This is the largest infrastructure project we've ever worked on."

Hill explained the most challenging piece of being part of high-speed rail has probably been the most beneficial for her and her staff - working with a wide variety of acquisitions and relocations, all on one project.

In the Central Valley, CFS played an integral role in the right-of-way acquisition of local businesses like Alert-o-Lite, Gymnastics Beat and STARS Dance Studio, all of which were located on or near the Madera to Fresno alignment. With the help of CFS, these businesses were successfully relocated.

"These businesses were examples of those who were impacted by high-speed rail at a time their businesses were growing," added Hill. "We were able to work with them and the Authority to relocate them to locations more beneficial for business."

Alert-o-Lite reopened last year at their new 32,600 square-foot building in southeast Fresno, a few miles south from its previous



1. When Gymnastics Beat had to move to make way for the high-speed rail project, Continental Field Service helped the center move to a new home with 18,000 square feet of space. Gym owner Sam Shima likes the new location because it allows him to expand his student roster.



2. Environmental attorney Beth Wilson Hill (left) heads Continental Field Service, a Fresno-based firm, which has helped purchase more than \$200 million worth of property for the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley.

Environmental Expert Keeps Water Clean During Construction

Geologist **Evan Studley** slowly trundled across a temporary wooden trestle deck under the viaduct. “I walk the entire alignment on a weekly basis,” he said.

Studley is a program manager for **Soar Environmental Consulting**. He’s also the **Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)** oversight coordinator for the high-speed rail project and said every construction project is required to have a storm water prevention pollution plan in place.

Studley pointed to an embankment that ends in the San Joaquin River. It was relatively steep before high-speed rail construction work began, and he’s keeping an eye on it because the contractor rebuilt it.

His concern is that sediment or dirt, the

biggest polluter at a construction site, will make its way into the San Joaquin River, the second largest river in the state and the high-speed rail project’s most sensitive site.

“We’re not allowed to put any sediment into the river,” Studley explained. “It’s not good for the species in the river.”

The river is home to benthic animals, organisms such as sponges, bristle worms, mollusks and crustaceans that live at the lowest level of a body of water. Some of them are attached to stones or other organisms while others are buried in sediment. They’re also part of the food chain because fish, including flatfishes, catfish and haddock, feed on them.

Studley makes sure methods set up to stop

sediment from flowing into the water are working. “There’s benthic animals that need to breathe, and when they get covered with sediment it suffocates them,” he said. “I’m just checking for rips or tears in [plastic sheeting] here. These practices are designed to allow clean water to migrate into the river.”

This year, the seemingly endless string of storms has made Studley’s job challenging because the river is running high and rain runoff can wash sediment into the river.

When we talked to Studley in April, the river was flowing at 3,250 cubic feet per second, about six times higher than the week before. High water had forced crews to move their equipment out of some work zones. But he was happy with steps being taken to keep the water clean. He added, “Everything looks like it’s flowing smoothly.”

Justin Chechourka

“I walk the entire alignment on a weekly basis. We’re not allowed to put any sediment into the river. It’s not good for the species in the river.”

Evan Studley
Program Manager
Soar Environmental Consulting



Evan Studley checks plastic sheeting at the San Joaquin River viaduct to ensure construction work isn’t allowing dirt or sediment to leak into the San Joaquin River and harm fish and other animals just north of Fresno. Every week, Studley walks the site located north of Fresno. Studley is a program manager for Soar Environmental Consulting. He also serves as Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan oversight coordinator for the high-speed rail project.

Biologist Scans Skies for Bird Safety

“If we’re working in a proximity to that nest, we need to check it throughout the day to ensure that no project activities are creating a disturbance that could potentially lead to mass failure or nest abandonment.”

Rachel Clark
Senior Wildlife Biologist
Soar Environmental Consulting



Rachel Clark searches for birds and other animals at the San Joaquin River viaduct. The senior wildlife biologist said, “We look around to make sure everything is compliant.” If she finds that high-speed rail activities are harming birds and animals on the endangered or threatened species lists, construction may have to shut down temporarily. Of course, no one wants that. Clark added, “It’s a matter of everyone coexisting.”

Construction work begins bright and early on the San Joaquin River Viaduct in the Central Valley. But count **Rachel Clark** among those who show up at high-speed rail sites before construction crews. She works for Fresno-based **Soar Environmental Consulting**, a disabled veteran-owned business that makes sure Construction Package 1 and 2-3 adhere to all environmental mitigation measures and permit conditions.

Clark, a senior wildlife biologist, was literally looking for early birds. Looking skyward, she scanned the massive bridge structure. What she saw prompted her to grab a pair of binoculars. “Here, what I’m looking for is nesting birds,” she explained. “We do a site sweep prior to project activities beginning each day. We look around to make sure everything is compliant.”

She makes sure birds listed as endangered

or threatened will not be affected by construction activities.

As she scanned the massive bridge structure, Clark peered through her binoculars, again. Pointing upward, she said, “Up there on the bridge above the piers is a European Starling going in and out. That’s an invasive species that we don’t mitigate for, so we don’t have to worry about that.”

Then Clark pursed her lips and emitted a sound called pishing. She explained, “It kind of mimics an alarm call. It gets birds’ attention most of the time, so they’ll come out of hiding and I can see what (kind of bird) they are.”

Birds nesting on the bridge did not disappoint her. “Ooh, I think that’s a Lincoln’s Sparrow,” she said. Fortunately, that bird isn’t threatened or endangered either.

She checked the ground and peered into pipes, other materials and equipment, pointing out that she’s also looking for mammals that may nest on equipment or burrow underground. Clark explained humans are required to keep a certain distance away from endangered and threatened species. She said, “If we’re working in a proximity to that nest, we need to check it throughout the day to ensure that no project activities are creating a disturbance that could potentially lead to mass failure or nest abandonment.”

If sensitive species are in danger, construction may have to shut down. According to Clark, no one wants that. She added, “It’s a matter of everyone coexisting.”

Justin Chechourka

Track and Systems Procurement Process Begins

The Authority has made a giant leap forward in its quest to put high-speed trains on the tracks. In July, the Authority Board of Directors approved the release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the [Track and Systems](#) contract, the procurement needed to complete the Central Valley portion of California's high-speed rail project.

The RFQ solicits teams to send the Authority their Statements of Qualifications (SOQs). Qualified offerors will go on a shortlist of teams and be allowed to respond when the Track and Systems Request for Proposals (RFP) is released in the fall.

The Track and Systems procurement will be a design-build-maintain contract requiring the winning bidder to design, build, test and commission trackwork, railway and electrification systems. It also includes a 30-year maintenance agreement for infrastructure, track and systems and building and maintaining high-speed rail maintenance facilities.

The work would begin following Notices to Proceed (NTP) for several high-speed rail segments, including Construction Packages 1 through 4, stretching from Madera to Poplar Avenue north of Bakersfield. We anticipate the first NTP will be issued during the summer of 2020 at an estimated cost of \$1.65 billion. Estimated costs for future NTPs will be developed using a schedule of values provided by qualified proposers.

Karen Massie



2019 Project Update Report Looks at Progress and Future of High-Speed Rail

Anyone who's interested in progress and the future of the high-speed rail in California should look at the [2019 Project Update Report \(PUR\)](#).

In May, the Authority delivered the report to the California State Legislature. The report summarizes work completed since the adoption of the 2018 Business Plan. It also discusses a building block approach to delivering an operating section in the Central Valley, while keeping our commitment to continue working on high-speed rail in Northern and Southern California. We plan to live within our means to deliver the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield line, while demonstrating the project's feasibility and attracting other funding to complete the line north to south.

Recently, the Authority's Early Train Operator and the Authority's team completed reports on refined cost estimates and an analysis of early service, updated cost and funding information, issues and risks. That information is included in the 2019 PUR, along with plans to mitigate those risks and continue moving forward with the high-speed rail program.

Karen Massie



Wading in EBMUD Contract Waters with Beverly Johnson

Beverly Johnson has just about heard it all when it comes to small businesses and government contracting. “I have dedicated over 40 years to advocating for historically underutilized small businesses, which pretty much represents my whole professional career.”

Starting out, she worked at the San Francisco Business Development Center. Then she moved to an Emeryville-based private consulting firm where she provided support services for state and county agencies who wanted to identify contract opportunities for disadvantaged businesses.

In 1987, her mother and two trailblazing African-American women at **East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)** convinced her the utility would mean job security.

“The benefits of working in the public sector were better than working for a small consulting firm that was always competing for the next contract,” she recalled. “It was too cut-throat for me [and] getting the opportunity for a ‘good government job,’ as my mom would say, was ideal.”

Today, as head of the **Contract Equity Program (CE Program)**, Johnson travels throughout California educating small businesses about upcoming work at EBMUD, which provides drinking water to about 1.4 million customers in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and runs a wastewater treatment plant for about 685,000 people on the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. Contractors must be cognizant of the utility’s stringent water standards, which are twice as strict as ever tightening state and federal standards.

EBMUD has a small business (SB) set-aside provision for contract awards of \$80,000 or less and a SB goal of 50 percent. The CE Program’s contracting objectives are 25 percent for ethnic minorities, 6.3 percent for white women, and 25 percent for white men. Small businesses get discounts when competing against non-small businesses. Getting in the pool to compete can be difficult.

“The biggest challenge for getting contracts with EBMUD is the lowest responsible bid requirement,” Johnson

explained. “For construction, the type of work we do is typically below ground (general engineering), rather than above ground (general building).” EBMUD buys lots of pipe and chemicals, but Johnson noted, “There is very limited [number] of disadvantaged and disabled veteran-owned businesses that can supply these items.”

In fiscal year 2018, EBMUD awarded about \$144 million worth of contracts with \$32.1 million going to small businesses where two were identified as veteran-owned firms. Another \$29 million went to firms owned by ethnic minorities and white women.

Johnson encourages small businesses to adopt her philosophy for getting a piece of the contracting pie. “You have to be dedicated, patient and swallow a lot!” she laughed. “It is important to be able to take a step back and fully examine the situation as you remember your real and ultimate purpose.”

Karen Massie



“The biggest challenge for getting contracts with EBMUD is the lowest responsible bid requirement. For construction, the type of work we do is typically below ground (general engineering), rather than above ground (general building).”

Beverly Johnson
Contract Equity Administrator
East Bay Municipal Utility District



1. Contract Equity Administrator Beverly Johnson travels throughout California doing presentations about opportunities at East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD).

2. Beverly Johnson has received many honors for her 30 years of work at EBMUD, including a Hall of Fame Award from the Western Regional Minority Supplier Development Council.

California Capital Helps Small Businesses Capitalize on Government Contracts



"You have to have someone believe in you before you believe in yourself," said Alfredo Sanchez. The Sacramento entrepreneur explained his marketing firm, **Alfredo Media**, had garnered several clients with up to 20 employees, but he didn't think he had anything to offer city, county and state governments.

Ivor Newman changed Sanchez's mind. Newman is the Program Director with **California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)**. "Ivor helped me get certified as a small business," Sanchez said. "I met with him. He gave me a checklist and convinced me I could bid on government contracts."

When Sanchez partnered with **CineCrown Media Productions** as its marketing director, he certified the company and led the firm's bid for a consulting and marketing contract with the California Arts Council. "I knew what to do because of PTAC," Sanchez said.

Sanchez is just one of thousands of small businesses who have reached out to PTAC,

which is part of **California Capital Financial Development Corporation**, a non-profit organization that serves as a one-stop-shop for small businesses that need help.

"The organization was originally structured to operate the State of California Small Business Loan Guarantee Program," said Newman. "Now, we operate several programs that support clients beyond their financial needs. We help them start and grow their business," said Newman.

California Capital opened its doors 37 years ago, providing new and existing small businesses with guarantees on bank loans. Today, the organization employs 20 people who run and provide support for 17 programs including PTAC, a **Women's Business Center** and Small Business Development Center with affiliate offices in Sacramento and Stockton.

When it comes to access to money, California Capital targets small business owners like Sanchez, people from underserved communities who don't have access to traditional financing. "Our



"We operate several programs that support clients beyond their financial needs. We help them start and grow their business."

Ivor Newman
Program Director
California Capital Procurement
Technical Assistance Center

Jumpstart Microloan Loan Program

provides financing from \$500 to \$10,000 to startup and existing businesses that could have a significant impact in disadvantaged neighborhoods such as job creation," explained Newman. "Since the program's



1. Whether long-time entrepreneurs or just starting out, small business owners can come to California Capital Financial Development Corp. workshops to get tips on how to improve their businesses and boost their bottom lines.
2. Deborah Lowe Muramoto, California Capital President and CEO, tells business owners California Capital can give them loans when the banks won't. California Capital offers several loans, including Jumpstart microloans for minority and women-owned firms who need \$500 to \$10,000. In July, California Capital started a new program that provides loans up to \$50,000.

inception in 2017, it has funded 11 Jumpstart loans totaling \$86,000 to minority and women owned businesses.” In July, California Capital launched an additional lending program that provides loans up to \$50,000.

The Women’s Business Center (WBC) also works with startups and existing businesses. Newman said, “The WBC encourages women to explore and embrace entrepreneurship. Last year, the WBC provided training and counseling to more than 2,800 entrepreneurs and access to more than \$27 million in capital.”

The PTAC arm of California Capital travels throughout the state helping small businesses prepare for, pursue and perform on government contracts. In the last 12 months, PTAC procurement specialists have facilitated, hosted or participated in over 53 small business events. California Capital has facilitated, hosted or participated in more than 250 events.

According to Newman, small businesses also get personalized help. He said, “We provide one-on-one counseling tailored to the needs of individual businesses, training workshops and webinars from beginning to advanced level topics, and match firms to contracts that are appropriate for them.”

The support has led to success. Last year, 73 California Capital clients landed government contracts worth more than \$47.6 million.

Sanchez tells other small business owners that California Capital can help them like it helped him. “Any new contract offer that comes in for my company, we’ll be ready.”

Karen Massie



1. Alfredo Sanchez received free one-on-one counseling from Ivor Newman, the program director for California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Sanchez had some marketing contracts, but admitted Newman convinced him to get his firm certified as a small business and start bidding on government contracts.

2. California Capital runs and provides support for 17 programs that help small businesses. In 2012, California Capital launched its Women’s Business Center. Last year the Center provided training and counseling to over 2,800 entrepreneurs and access to more than \$27 million in capital.

3. Ivor Newman, who runs the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, gives a presentation at a California Capital workshop. In addition to counseling, he and his staff match small businesses to government contracts. Last year, 73 clients landed more than \$47.6 million worth of government contracts.



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