

# Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • Volume 11: Issue 03

SUMMER 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).

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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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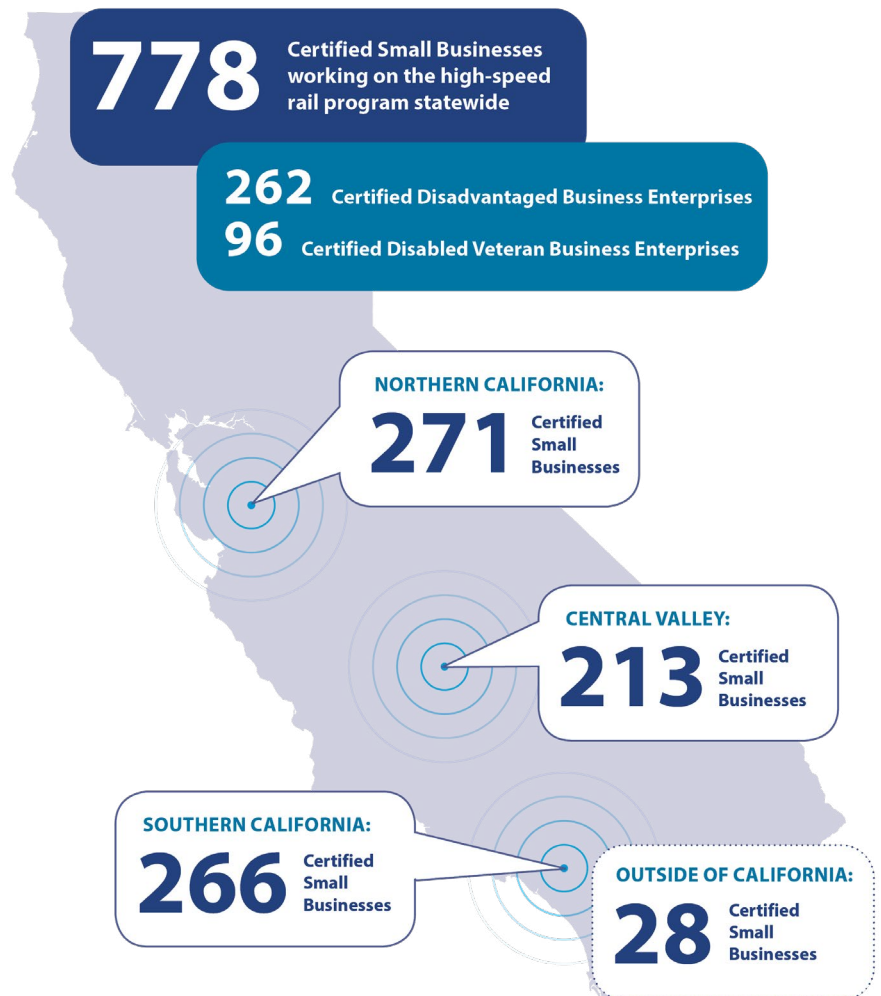
To view past newsletters visit:

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

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

### SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

as of May 2023



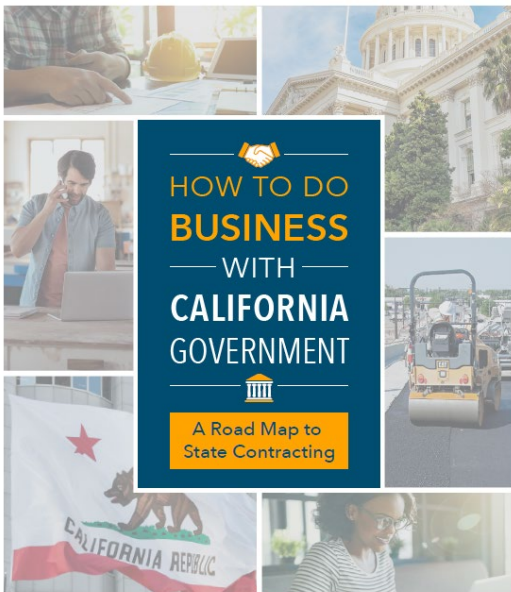
# How to Do Business With the State of California

Visit these resources for education, training, and support in growing a thriving business, doing business with the state of California, and connecting with the High-Speed Rail Authority.



**Connect with High-Speed Rail**

Register your business at [www.ConnectHSR.com](http://www.ConnectHSR.com)

**HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT**

A Road Map to State Contracting

**DGS** CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES  
Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services

**AMERICA'S SBDC CALIFORNIA**

There are 56 Small Business Development Centers in California, working to help small businesses

[www.californiasbdc.org](http://www.californiasbdc.org)

We help entrepreneurs start, grow or successfully exit businesses through mentoring and education.

[www.score.org](http://www.score.org)

**SCORE**

FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS

**APEX ACCELERATORS**

[www.apexaccelerators.us/#/](http://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/)



APEX Accelerators provide education and training to ensure that all businesses become capable of participating in federal, state, and local government contracts.

# Did You Know?

## Frequently Asked Questions from Small Businesses

- *How do I stay informed about the Authority's Small Business Program as an individual?*

Learn the various ways you can connect with the Authority by visiting [Get Connected](#).

Sign up and select to receive small business emails, workshop and event announcements by visiting: <https://hsr.ca.gov/contact/> and selecting the "Small Business/ConnectHSR" Email Alert.

- *How do I stay informed about the Authority's Small Business Program as a business?*

Businesses can stay informed by registering with ConnectHSR, the Authority's free online vendor registry. ConnectHSR provides all businesses with a quick and easy way to stay connected to high-speed rail business opportunities. Participation in ConnectHSR is open to all businesses. Learn more about ConnectHSR by visiting, [Get Connected](#).

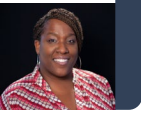
Additionally, you can sign up for email notifications regarding HSR specific projects sections via [HSR Contact Us](#). And you can join us at any of our Small Business events and workshops to learn how to do business with the Authority, how to get certified and more. Visit the [HSR Events page](#) for event dates and details.

## Business Advisory Council Profiles



**Adam Holt, American Indian Chamber of Commerce of California**

Adam Holt is the Chief Financial Officer and senior executive at Blair, Church & Flynn Consulting Engineers with more than 25 years in the Architecture, Engineering and Construction industry. He serves a dual role between corporate leadership and program-level planning and management for infrastructure projects. Since 2015, Mr. Holt has represented the American Indian Chamber of Commerce on the High-Speed Rail Business Advisory Council.



Small business owners learning about ACDBE/DBE Certification at the Oakland International Airport.

**H**ello out there to everyone in the small business community, and I hope you all are enjoying your summer so far and staying cool. I'm filling in with a special edition of *Catrina's Corner* as we work to bring on a new Small Business Advocate here at the Authority. When we fill that position, we'll be sure to let you know.

We've seen a lot of progress on the high-speed rail project in 2023. In the coming weeks, we are targeting substantial completion of Construction Package 4, the southernmost portion of the 119 miles currently under construction in the Central Valley. This represents a huge milestone for this project as we keep moving towards delivering high-speed rail.

We're also moving forward with major procurements related to this project. In the second half this year, we will be implementing a procurement strategy that incorporates broader procurement methods, smaller contracts, increased flexibility, and an emphasis

on maximizing qualified bidder pools. We had a discussion with our Board at our recent July meeting on procurements "Lessons Learned" and an outline of our proposed strategy to advance procurements. Those materials are available [here](#). If you haven't already, now is the time to make sure you are signed up for our vendor registry [ConnectHSR](#) so we can let you know about upcoming opportunities.

In case you missed it, at the end of June, we participated in Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprises/Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE/DBE) certification workshop at the Oakland International Airport. At this event, there were overview presentations of the ACDBE/DBE program and certification process. Caltrans presented on how to apply for DBE certification, and Caltrans and other Northern California DBE certifying transportation agencies were on site to assist with application preparation and submissions. The Department



Authority Small Business Outreach Coordinator Damon Dorn speaking with a member of the small business community.



Authority Small Business Outreach Manager Annette Picetti tabling at the certification workshop.

of General Services was also present to educate and assist attendees on the California SB and DVBE certifications, which are all required to get business on the high-speed rail project. We love doing events like this and are always looking for future opportunities to join up with our small business partners virtually and in person.

And on that note, please be sure to mark your calendars for October 25. We'll be hosting an in-person Small Business Resource and Matchmaking Event at the Department of General Services in West Sacramento. We will be bringing together state agencies, resource partner organizations and our high-speed rail prime contractors to host resource booths and do matchmaking. This event is open to the public, and we are targeting Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, Small Businesses and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises in particular. More details will be coming as we get closer to the event, so keep a look out for additional information as it becomes available. We're also working on scheduling virtual regular small business workshops each month to make sure members of the small business community are tied in with project opportunities.

Later this month, I'll be going to our Board of Directors to talk about our small business program and clarify the goals of the program. We appreciate all of the small businesses that continue to help us shape the Authority's Small Business Program, and of course, our Business Advisory Council. Starting this issue, we're providing brief profiles of our Business Advisory Council member organizations in the Resources pages in this newsletter so we can recognize them all.

From our small business team here, we all want to say thanks for helping us deliver the nation's first true high-speed rail project, and we look forward to working with you all.

# Small Business Events



## Authority Board of Directors Meeting

**September 20-21, 2023**

Time TBD

San Diego Location TBD

**October 19, 2023**

11 a.m.

Department of Food and Agriculture Auditorium

1220 N. Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

**November 16, 2023**

11 a.m.

Department of Food and Agriculture Auditorium

1220 N. Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

## Small Business Program Business Advisory Council Meeting

**September 27, 2023**

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Virtual

**November 29, 2023**

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Virtual

**August 29, 2023**

[California Capital APEX Workshop](#)

10 a.m.

Virtual

**August 30, 2023**

[Caltrans District 11 19th Annual Procurement & Resource Fair](#)

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

District 11 Courtyard, 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego

**October 25, 2023**

**Small Business Resource and Matchmaking Event**

Department of General Services, 707 Third Street,

West Sacramento

To receive announcements, updates and event details delivered to your inbox, check out our FAQ in this edition and learn how to Get Connected!

# Speedreads



## JAPAN TO TRAIN 1,000 INDIAN ENGINEERS BEFORE TRANSFER OF BULLET TRAIN TECH

Engineers for the [Mumbai Ahmedabad High Speed Rail corridor \(MAHSR\) in India](#) will be trained to lay track using the ballast-less Slab Track system (popularly known as J Slab track system), the same system used by the Japanese Shinkansen. This tracks system has been unique to Japan and requires a very high skill level. Up to 20 Japanese experts will teach 15 different courses of intensive trainings in a specially created training facility in Surat Depot. (Vijay Soneji)



## THE 10 FASTEST HIGH-SPEED RAIL TRAINS AROUND THE WORLD

Many high-speed rail projects broke ground in 2022, making up five out of the 10 most expensive rail projects in the world. [The ongoing advances in high-speed rail technology and infrastructure makes for a promising future for alternative efficient and convenient travel.](#) China accounts for having three out of the five fastest high-speed trains, running at record test speeds of 420 kilometers per hour (km/hr) to 501 km/hr. Countries also in the top 10 fastest high-speed trains list are Germany, France, Japan, Morocco, Spain, Korea and Italy. (Photo Courtesy of Getty Images // Marian)



## PHASE 1 OF BANGKOK-KORAT HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINE READY 'BY 2026'

Thai government spokesman, Anucha Burapachaisri announced the first phase of the high-speed rail line that will connect the Chinese city of Kunming to Bangkok will be completed by 2026. [The project spans 251-kilometer and includes 15 construction contracts.](#) Of these contracts, one has been completed, 10 are underway, and three others are awaiting signatures from authorities. The project, expected to help enhance the country's economy and well-being, has experienced delays since its first proposal to the government in 2010. (Photo Courtesy of Visual China Group (VCG))



## MALAYSIA SEEKS PROPOSALS TO REVIVE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT WITH SINGAPORE

After calling off the multi-billion-dollar project two years ago, Malaysia announced the country was seeking proposals from private firms to develop a high-speed rail system. [This 350-kilometer rail line will connect Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur to Singapore.](#) MyHSR Corp, a Malaysian-government owned company responsible for the project, stated that it invites local and international firms to submit proposals in a public-private partnership model. (Photo courtesy of Edalman)





## MUMBAI-AHMEDABAD HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT WORK IN FULL SWING

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail project in India is progressing after accomplishing huge milestones in construction. [The 508-kilometer project recently celebrated its completion of a 61.3-kilometer viaduct, which comes after its completion of a 50-kilometer viaduct within a span of seven months.](#) The alignment will include 12 high-speed rail stations, eight of which are already under construction. Further, the project has created a dedicated training facility with Japanese experts providing specialized training to Indian engineers, supervisors and technicians on the project. (Photo Courtesy of the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited)



## WHICH CITIES IN NORTHERN GERMANY COULD BE CONNECTED BY HIGH-SPEED TRAINS?

With a goal of improving Europe's interconnectivity by rail, German national railway company Deutsche Bahn conducted a study to expand its high-speed rail network. [The study proposed newly built or expanded high-speed rail lines of around 21,000 kilometers across Europe.](#) It included a travel demand model which predicts the natural growth of transport demand while assessing the impact of reduced travel times with a better-connected high-speed rail system. High-speed rail lines in Northern Germany have been proposed as a result of the study, including connections to Denmark through Hanover, Hamburg, Kiel and Aalborg, which are projected to be completed by 2030. These lines are expected to run trains at speeds up to 300 kilometers per hour. (Photo Courtesy of Deutsche Bahn)



## INDONESIA TESTS FIRST HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Indonesia has begun trial runs of its first high-speed rail train, which will connect the capital of Jakarta to the neighboring city of Bandung. [The project, which was initially scheduled to be completed by 2019, has faced numerous delays and cost barriers, and is now expected for a soft launch in August.](#) It began with an initial expected price of less than \$6 billion to becoming a project costing just over \$7 billion. As a part of China's Belt Road Initiative, the 142-kilometer high-speed rail journey will take as little as 36 minutes, going at speeds of 355 kilometers per hour and carrying up to 601 passengers. (Photo Courtesy of Dimas Ardian//Bloomberg)

# Environmental Consultant Gets Creative to Save Wetland Species



Brent Helm says he spends 365 days a year in wetlands. Helm helps the Authority preserve acres of land to help wildlife along our alignment.

**B**efore the bulldozers and concrete trucks break ground, there's Brent Helm. He's a biologist and ecologist who specializes in preserving wetlands. When the California High-Speed Rail Authority begins work on a project, it's Helm who is often the first boots on the ground.

While the project has big intentions, Helm is worried about the little things – fairy shrimp, specifically. Helm has been all over the state while working for the Authority. An expert in wetlands, he geeks out talking about fairy shrimp. The one-inch long crustaceans live in vernal pools as far south as Visalia, where Helm helped build refuges to support the invertebrates.

While wildlife and wild spaces are sparse in the Central Valley, Helm says the Bay Area presents a stark contrast, with its dense concentration of sensitive habitats and dependent species.

"The Bay Area is going to be very rich. There's a lot of teeny species and a lot of cool habitats as well," he said.

Big or little, it's Helm's job to make sure California wildlife is front and center in the Authority's building process. His company, [Helm Biological Consulting](#), is a certified small business. It's an environmental consulting firm specializing in biological resource studies, mitigation banking, habitat establishment and ecological research.



Brent Helm working in the lab

He has another small business, Wetland Construction Team, which builds wetlands.

The businesses are small, which means Helm is wearing waders or rubber boots almost 365 days a year.

As part of the construction process, the Authority has preserved thousands of acres of land to mitigate the effects of building a high-speed rail line. Helm figures out how to conserve land in a way that supports as much biodiversity as possible. He surveys the ecology, determines what would best suit the creatures in that area, then he builds a proper wetland to support that life.

Often, that means getting creative.

“We do weird stuff,” Helm said, chuckling as he thinks about both the tiny wildlife and large animals he works with. “A guy I work with says ‘Brent can build wetlands on the moon if you give him enough money and time.’”

He’s had plenty of work to do. In Tulare County, Helm helped build the Cottonwood Creek mitigation site, which is one of the few areas set aside for wildlife in the farm-rich Central Valley. Going green is a core mission for the Authority. Yes, we’re delivering green transportation, powered by 100% renewable energy. The Authority is also going the extra mile to protect the environment. To date, we have preserved and restored about 3,000 acres of habitat, giving species both rare and not-so-rare a place to call home in the crowded Central Valley farmlands. The authority relies on Helm and other consultants’ abilities to

think outside the box to realize this enormous project.

“From what I’ve seen, the mitigation that the high-speed rail has done is probably more than adequate compared to other projects,” Helm said. “They took it on the chin and a lot of the mitigation is larger than what it would have been if somebody else was doing the work. I think there’s some really unique habitats being preserved.

The commitment to wildlife even includes inventing a unique electrification system, which will prevent our state’s giant California condors from getting electrocuted by the overhead wires.

The diversity of the Bay Area’s ecosystem is exciting to Helm. His office is in Sheridan in Placer County, but he can regularly be found in waders or muck boots throughout the state. He likes to say he sees wetlands every day of the year, though there’s an occasional visit to Florida to see his grandchildren. As the high-speed rail project heads toward the Bay Area, Helm will likely be there, helping the project steer through a phalanx of environmental laws to do right by California’s wildlife.

Jim Patrick

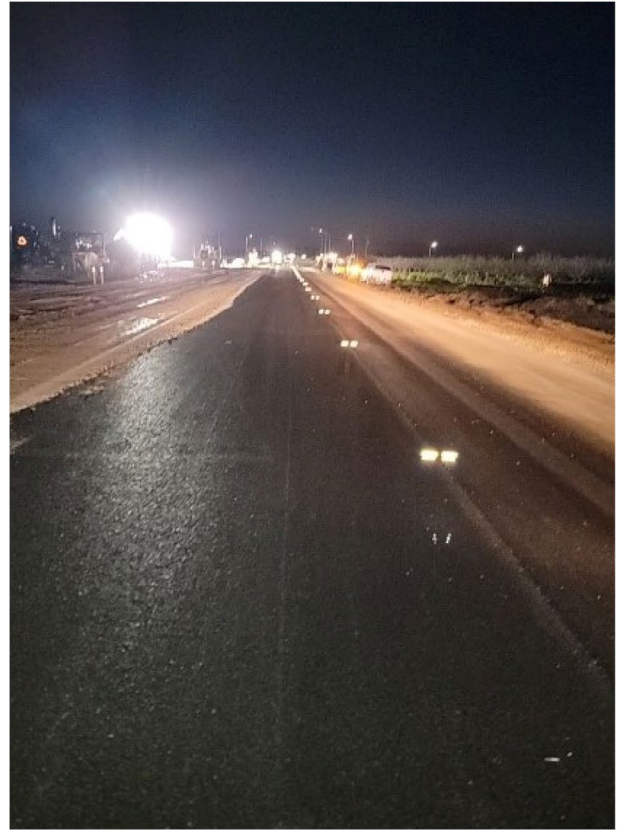


Cottonwood Creek Mitigation Site in Tulare County, California

# Authority, Contractor, and Small Businesses Team Up, Offer Aid to Help With Unprecedented Storms



Paving of Whitley Avenue



**E**arlier this year, atmospheric rivers brought unprecedented storms and flooding to the Central Valley impacting residents of Fresno, Tulare and Kings Counties. Several local agencies including county entities, Caltrans and the City of Corcoran reached out to the Authority to lend a hand and help the nearby communities impacted by the flooding. At the request of the City of Corcoran, the Authority and Construction Package 2-3 contractor Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV) jumped into action and assessed the situation to pave and reopen Whitley Avenue.

The reopening of Whitley Avenue was no easy task and took the support of sub-contractors and small businesses working with DFJV to make this happen. The road was closed to traffic weeks prior to begin construction of a

high-speed rail underpass. However, the ongoing storms and the need of an additional road for emergency services and potential evacuations became a necessity.

Over four days, the Authority, DFJV, Papich Construction, and small businesses Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt, Trahan Enterprises and G&H Heavy Haul all worked around the clock to ensure Whitley Avenue was paved and open to traffic, even amidst the ongoing rain. All of the businesses have a working relationship with the Authority and DFJV, which allowed for the work to commence immediately.

DFJV crew members began by prepping the roadway with the aid of small businesses Trahan Enterprises and G&H Heavy Gaul. This included pumping water out of the saturated grounds and placing and compacting asphalt



Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt Facility in Porterville, CA (Jaxon Enterprises)

concrete millings over the roadway to ensure it was as smooth as possible. Crew members also shaved and transported embankment soil to the roadway, which was placed over the asphalt concrete.

DFJV reached out to local small business Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt and ordered aggregates, which are rock and asphalt concrete products that would be placed all along Whitley. Based just north of Corcoran in Porterville, Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt have been providing aggregate products to the Authority and DFJV since the beginning of construction.

“We were able to respond quickly and supply the materials that were requested from us almost immediately. We had most of what we needed in inventory,” said Jaxon Baker, president of Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt. The aggregate base was delivered the next day and DFJV crew members placed the asphalt along the roadway shortly after.

Despite the incessant rain, the Authority, DFJV, and small businesses were determined to complete the prepping of the roadway for it to be paved.

Enter Papich Construction, DFJV’s main contractor, to pave roadways along the 65-mile segment. Based in Arroyo Grande, Papich Construction has worked with the Authority and DFJV since the start of the project. Project Manager Nicolle Crawford shared that they were up against another storm that would arrive later that weekend, so the crew members worked around the clock to get the roadway paved.

“When we got the call for the emergency work, everybody was like ‘ok, tell us where to go.’ We moved our guys in from the coast off another project,” said Crawford.

When asked why was getting involved important to Papich Construction, Nicolle shared, “When you see

the news and hear people are losing access, it’s sad. So, we jumped in to help where we could. Our guys were committed to seeing the work through.”

By 10 p.m. that night, the roadway had been completely paved and open to traffic. DFJV reached out to the City of Corcoran and Caltrans and shared the news. The community of Corcoran now had access to Whitley Avenue as an evacuation route, especially when several other roadways leading in and out of Corcoran had already been flooded.

In a statement provided by Jaxon Baker, president of Deer Creek Rock Company, he wrote, “I want to express our gratitude to the California High Speed Rail Authority and its contractor, Dragados-Flatiron [Joint Venture], for working with us to arrive at a satisfactory outcome. Their recognition of the external challenges the project encountered and their effort to find a just and fair solutions has been commendable. The [high-speed rail] project has exhibited a sense of partnership valuing the contributions of small businesses like ours and treating us fairly during these uncertain times.”

Sub-contractors like Papich Construction and small businesses like Deer Creek Rock and Asphalt, Trahan Enterprises, G&H Heavy Haul and others not only play a critical role in building the nation’s first high speed rail project but are invaluable during emergency events such as this one. The Authority values the partnerships with the small businesses, and it is during these times that everyone can come together to assist those who are most vulnerable.

Augie Blancas



# Earth Mechanics Inc. (EMI)



A member of EMI's drilling team setting up on a hole along the Bakersfield to Palmdale project section.

Depending on who you ask, the 1980s are responsible for everything good in this world. From the action-packed blockbuster movies that Hollywood continues to remake, the introduction of the World Wide Web, and for Lino Cheang and Po Lam – the founding of [Earth Mechanics Inc. \(EMI\)](#). Founded in 1989, EMI punched its ticket into the 80s with a buzzer-beater. Fitting, considering that Michael Jordan's iconic buzzer-beater, "The Shot", occurred during the 1989 Eastern Conference playoffs. Surely just a coincidence.

Cheang and Lam were both degreed with a background in designing foundations for coastal and offshore structures. Originally focused on the oil and gas industry, EMI shifted attention to California bridges after the industry downturn in the mid-80s. EMI faced the challenge of developing its business in its early days, relying mainly on previous professional contacts and clients for contracts.

Their breakthrough came when Lam joined a committee established by Caltrans following the Loma Prieta and

Northridge Earthquakes. Caltrans initiated a bridge seismic retrofit program to address earthquake vulnerabilities in older structures. Lam's contributions, which included a seismic evaluation policy for bridges, played a significant role in EMI's growth. As a result, EMI quickly gained industry recognition, expanded its client base, and opened additional offices in San Diego, Orange, and Alameda counties over time.

EMI has been involved in the California High-Speed Rail project for over a decade. They are currently on board as a geotechnical consultant for the 31 bridges and viaducts along the Bakersfield to Palmdale segment, responsible for supporting the structure designers with identifying the geologic and geotechnical hazards for each of the 31 structures. Additionally, EMI is tasked with preparing the preliminary foundation design recommendations for each structure and with the development of a geotechnical investigation plan that will assist the Authority to secure permits required to perform geotechnical site investigation at the 65% design phase.

Eric Brown, Principal at EMI, is encouraged by the investment placed in bringing a high-speed rail system to the west coast. "It is a monumental task linking Southern

and Northern California via high-speed rail, but it will be the backbone of a much larger system that will continue to expand long after my career is over. The fact that there is already another high-speed rail system in design is a testament to that." In addition to the California High-Speed Rail project, EMI is also working on Brightline West's High-Speed Rail project connecting Southern California to Las Vegas. Brown adds, "That project doesn't happen if the CA HSR project doesn't happen first."

Like the structures they work on, EMI's success has been stable and resilient. The company was fortunate to have not lost a single employee throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and today employs 35 staff. They're confident that what Cheang and Lam built decades ago is sustainable for years to come. Brown shares, "Our goal for the future is to continue to keep our clients happy so that we can continue to have the opportunity to work on interesting projects such as the CA HSR project and the other projects that we are fortunate to work on."

Anthony Stijepovic



## Earth Mechanics, Inc.

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### Geotechnical and Earthquake Engineering

# Highlighting The Small Business Team

## Meet the Small Business Team

**W**ith a goal of attaining 30 percent small business participation, including 10 percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and 3 percent Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE), the Authority's Small Business Team, with input from the Authority's Business Advisory Council (BAC), develops and implements the Authority's small business program. This small but mighty team of 14 staff and three units: the Small Business Outreach team, the Small Business Compliance team and the Title VI team, strives to meet these goals through a robust outreach and equity plan, providing outreach to potential contractors, providing supportive services to small businesses, ensuring contract compliance and implementing Title VI.



Small Business Outreach Coordinator Damon Dorn and Small Business Outreach Manager Annette Picetti provide information about the high-speed rail Authority's small business program.

## SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH TEAM

Last year, the Small Business Outreach team, which provides small businesses with outreach, resources, education and supportive services, conducted over 26 educational workshops and outreach events for small businesses throughout California, responded to over 232 small business inquiries on the project and engaged with 1,414 active vendor registry accounts in the ConnectHSR database.

The Small Business Outreach team strives to support and connect small businesses to high-speed rail

project opportunities. They maintain and implement the ConnectHSR database, a free registry for businesses that is searchable by current and prospective primes and is a communication system, that notifies of business-focused events such as Pre-Bids, Meet the Primes, Small Business Workshops, trainings and more. They also engage, support and educate small businesses via outreach events, trainings, workshops, certification education and the Small Business website. Though the Authority is not a certifying agency, the Small Business Outreach team supports and educates small businesses on how to become certified and advance towards opportunity.



**SMALL BUSINESS COMPLIANCE TEAM**

The Small Business Compliance team hosts contract kickoff meetings. The meetings are designed to educate the contractors on the requirements of the small business program, discuss expectations and review all agreements between the prime, the Authority and the prime and subcontractors. Additionally, the compliance team also generates small business utilization data used to track prompt payment, create mandated reports and populate the small business program dashboard on the website. As of last year, the compliance team successfully corrected over 240 discrepancies in small business contracts, recovering over \$10 million in small business utilization. While onboarding 97 new small businesses, the compliance team has also streamlined contracts and expenditures in small business reporting, saving over 20 hours a month and producing a more concise report for the Authority and stakeholders.



The Small Business compliance team visits structures in the Central Valley.



Process and Program Development Branch Chief Catrina Blair presents on the Authority's small business program.

engagement in outreach to disadvantaged communities, small businesses in disadvantaged communities, Title VI classifications and the Authority's accomplishments in resolving complaints.

These three units collaboratively engage and support California's small businesses as they participate in this transformative high-speed rail project.

**SMALL BUSINESS TITLE VI TEAM**

The Title VI team ensures the Authority complies with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance. Compliance efforts include providing information for the public and developing policy directives, documenting and reporting Title VI activities and processing complaints. The Title VI program directs small business staff to provide language access services to individuals who do not speak English as a first language or have limited ability to read, speak and write. The team also works with environmental justice communities to analyze any concerns of the project negatively impacting their disadvantaged community. Additionally, the team creates Annual Accomplishments Reports, which are legally required and provide information about public

Britney Ortiz

# From Running the Streets to Running a Construction Firm, BAC Member Jacqueline Pruitt Has Done It All



Jacqueline Pruitt

Jacqueline Pruitt had her eyes on a special prize when she became an apprentice [with Ironworkers Local 416](#) in the Los Angeles area. "I was told early before I even got in that I could start my own business and that stuck with me," Pruitt recalled.

She wasted no time getting on the path to being a boss. As an apprentice she started studying for her contractor's license and she aligned herself with ironworkers who were doing what she wanted to do.

"When I was an apprentice and I would hang out with this guy who is a journeyman," she explained. "Then I made friends with a foreman who knew how to run work at a job site. Then there came a point when I needed to hang out subcontractors and general contracts. I needed to try to absorb as much information from them as possible."



Jacqueline Pruitt with her mother



Jacqueline Pruitt on Ram Wall

She quickly moved up the ranks to become a journeyman. She worked on major projects like the [Long Beach Container Terminal](#) and the 73-story [Wilshire Grand Center](#) in Los Angeles, California's tallest building. She was a foreman on the [Hollywood Park Casino](#) build.

As a woman in a male dominated field, it wasn't easy. While machines lift large bundles of rebar rods made of steel, Pruitt pointed out, "At some point, we have to pick up the rebar, put it on our shoulders and carry it to where it goes. On some projects the bars can get up to two inches



Jacqueline Pruitt in Marvella Steel Placer Office

in thickness and 40 to 60 feet in length." Crews move the heavy load while carefully stepping over more rebar and other items on the job site. She added, "You just have to really be strong mentally and physically and pay attention and focus."

Today, as the owner of [Marvella Steel Placers](#), she employs 20 to 60 people, depending on the workload. She jumped right in to help at a Topanga Canyon worksite where her workers are tasked with installing steel rebar in concrete foundation pads for a huge water tank. Since launching her firm 7 years ago, she's landed contracts on some major Southern California projects including [LA Metro transit stations](#), the I-15 and I-405 freeways and [Destination Crenshaw](#), the largest Black public art project in the U.S.

"I'm licensed, insured, bondable up to \$8 million," Pruitt proudly stated. "I have multiple certifications and qualified skilled ironworkers on my team that can come and do the job. We provide quality safe work. We're always on time and on budget."

Becoming her own boss is quite an accomplishment, but pales in comparison to the fight against drugs, crime and homelessness that Pruitt endured many years ago. "I was a menace to my own society," Pruitt shared. "But God granted me the opportunity to change my life."

She pointed to a tattoo on her arm with the date May 19, 2003. "This is my sobriety date," she explained. "I just celebrated 20 years of sobriety on May 19th." Gesturing to the worksite, she added, "This is what I've built since being



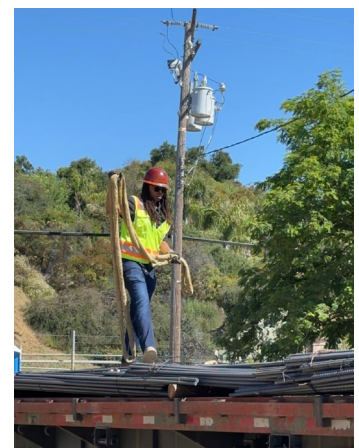
Inglewood Turkey Drive

sober. Staying out the streets, staying out of trouble, staying out of jail and to being on construction sites."

Recently, Pruitt became a member of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Business Advisory Council where she'll use her tenacious spirit to improve policies that increase small business participation on the high-speed rail project. She's big on getting more women to consider construction as a career.

Using her own life experience as an example, she said she'll offer women this advice, "What better else do you have to do? What do you have to lose? Give yourself a try. Give life a try. Life is about taking risks, setting goals and reaching your goals."

Karen Massie



(Left) Jacqueline Pruitt helps her employees install rebar  
(Right) Jacqueline Pruitt helping move iron rebar

# California Capital APEX—Providing Small Businesses Success Through Capability Statements

UNCLASSIFIED

## The California Capital APEX Team



- **Ivor Newman - Program Director 2018**
  - 25+ years of Program Management Experience
  - Positions held: COO, Global Program Manager, Program Manager, Project Manager
- **James Aldea - Procurement Counselor 2020**
  - 30+ years of Small Business management Experience
  - Positions held: US Air Force Contracting Specialist/Officer, Chief of Contracting, Contracting Officer, Contracting Training Officer.
- **Alex McCracken - Procurement Counselor 2020**
  - 20+ years of Small Business management Experience
  - Positions held: Small and Disadvantage Business Program Manager, Local Government Contracts Officer for Utah Department of Transportation
- **Ralph (Skip) Masters - Procurement Counselor 2019**
  - 25+ years of Small Business management Experience
  - Positions held: Small Business Liaison Officer (SBLO), Small Business Administrator, Procurement Counselor

The California Capital APEX Team

For the past 40 years, California Capital Apex—formerly known as California Capital PTAC, has been a guiding light to small businesses throughout California.

With a total of 8 APEX offices throughout California—California Capital APEX serves a total of 16 counties. From providing training, education, resources, and access to capital—California Capital Apex is there every step of the way. Best of all—these services are FREE to small businesses.

From walking them through certifications to navigating the process on how to apply for government contracts, California Capital Apex strives for success for its clients.

But before small businesses can even apply for government contracts, they need to learn how to submit a capability statement.

What is a capability statement?

A capability statement is basically a resume for a small business to pursue a government contract.

Alex McCracken has spent more than two decades helping businesses navigate through their business journeys.

“With government contracting becoming a competitive marketplace, it’s important for us to help our clients understand the contract process,” says Alex McCracken with California Capital Apex. “We basically translate government language into simple terms so that they can have success.”

While walking small businesses and entrepreneurs through the contract process—the most important element is the capability statement.



Alex McCracken, The California Capital APEX

**“With government contracting becoming a competitive marketplace, it’s important for us to help our clients understand the contract process. We basically translate government language into simple terms so that they can have success.”**

- Alex McCracken, Procurement Counselor,  
The California Capital APEX

The capability statement is a brief marketing document that showcases the company’s primary services and or products to the potential contractor.

When creating a capability statement, it is important to follow the desired format. By following the format, this will allow contractors to easily find the business information they are looking for.

A successful Capability Statement should include the following:

- *About us section: brief description about your company*
- *Core competencies: company’s skills, resources, and capabilities*
- *Differentiators: what separates you from your competitors*
- *Company Data: company size, number of employees, notable accomplishments/ certifications*
- *Past Performance: list of past clients/projects of importance*
- *Contact details: company contact information, email, phone number, and website*

When developing a successful capability statement, it’s important to be direct, concise and to the point.

“Creating a thorough capability statement to showcase a company will only help businesses to land contracts,” says Alex McCracken. “Our goal is to ensure that every client we work with has success in their business journey.”

To learn more about getting started with California Capital Apex and learn more please visit [www.cacapital.org](http://www.cacapital.org).

Sofia Gutierrez



# Authority Awarded \$20 Million in Federal Funds



FRA Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell speaks about the Authority's RAISE grant at the Historic Southern Pacific Train Depot in Fresno California.

In June, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$20 million from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program to the Authority for the Fresno High-Speed Rail Station Historic Depot Renovation and Plaza Activation Project.

The project will restore the historic passenger rail depot building in Fresno, near Chinatown and the site of the future high-speed rail station. The project will also create a functioning park and plazas as spaces for early site activation efforts and integrate critical zero-emissions vehicle infrastructure into historically disadvantaged communities.

"The Federal Railroad Administration congratulates the California High-Speed Rail Authority on their latest \$20 million RAISE grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, building on previous federal

investments that will help deliver high-speed rail in America and provide people with an alternative to crowded highways and airports," said FRA Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell. "President Biden's Investing in America agenda is transforming our country for the better, and it's going to keep making unprecedented investments to advance the 21st-century rail that Americans need and deserve."

Along with Deputy Administrator Mitchell, the event was attended by Authority Board Chair Tom Richards, U.S. Representative Jim Costa, State Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer and Fresno Councilmember Miguel Arias.

In addition to building improvements to the historic depot facility, which include accessibility upgrades and seismic reinforcement, amenities will also include:

- *Transit and vehicle electric charging in a resilience hub;*
- *Solar power generation capacity;*
- *Bicycle and scooter parking;*
- *Restored tree canopy and new shade structures;*
- *Resilient and improved stormwater management;*
- *Park and plaza space for public activities;*
- *Lease space opportunities; and*
- *Improved fencing and perimeter security.*

You can read more about this grant award [here](#).

Max Thogmartin



An illustration of the future Historic Depot Plaza

# Authority Staff Takes Part in Fun at California Railroad Museum



Chief Engineer Brian Maroney at the California Railroad Museum

It was all aboard for smiles and laughter at Family Summer Fun Nights held at the [California Railroad Museum](#) in Sacramento. The young and the old enjoyed vintage trains from days gone by. They even got a chance to hop on a handcar and push the pump lever up and down to make it move on a short indoor track.

"It's really exciting. It's our biggest and most popular event of the year for the members," said Melanie Alvarez, Event Manager for the museum. "We see about a thousand people over the two nights. They can enjoy lots of hands-on activities."

Some of those activities were set up by staff from the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Supervising Transportation Engineer Amit Joshi got down on his hands and knees to work with youngsters designing train systems in kiddie pools filled with black gravel. He helped his young charges put interlocking pieces of track together.

"Young kids are fascinated by trains and this live demonstration teaches them how the train system works," explained Joshi. "They also learn about bridges we're building, stations, connections and other factors being considered for high-speed rail. It's exciting to see the creative designs the young kids come up with."

Nearby, more engineers helped children draw a high-speed alignment on a map featuring a mythical community. The children had to figure out how to get



Boy planning an alignment on a map.



Supervising Engineer Amit Joshi helped youngsters build train tracks in a kiddie pool.



Summer Family Fun Nights are an annual event at the California Railroad Museum. Invitations to see the museum after-hours are extended to museum members. Over the two nights at the recent event, organizers said about 2,000 people showed up.

their train from one station to another by going around farms, trees, houses, bridges, businesses and other obstacles.

Roseville resident David Tourtillott is a parent who is looking forward to riding that train in real life. "We've made a few trips down to Disneyland," he said. "So, we hope eventually [high-speed rail] will provide an option on how to get there."

Maria-Dolores Hanefant, who came to the museum with her grandchildren, explained that Americans will love high-speed trains. She rode them in Europe before a recent move to West Sacramento. "They're more comfortable than planes," she stated. "You can move around or go to the dining car. In the sleeper car, you can take a shower, go to bed and wake up fresh the next morning in another city."

Authority staff also manned tables where they answered questions and provided updates on [119 miles of high-speed rail construction in the Central Valley](#).

In the near future, rail enthusiasts will be able to hop on board high-speed rail in California. And perhaps, the little ones who had so much fun at the California Railroad Museum will also join the ranks of engineers and others who are working hard to make it happen.

Karen Massie



Families pulled and pushed together on the pump lever to get an old-fashioned handcar to move.



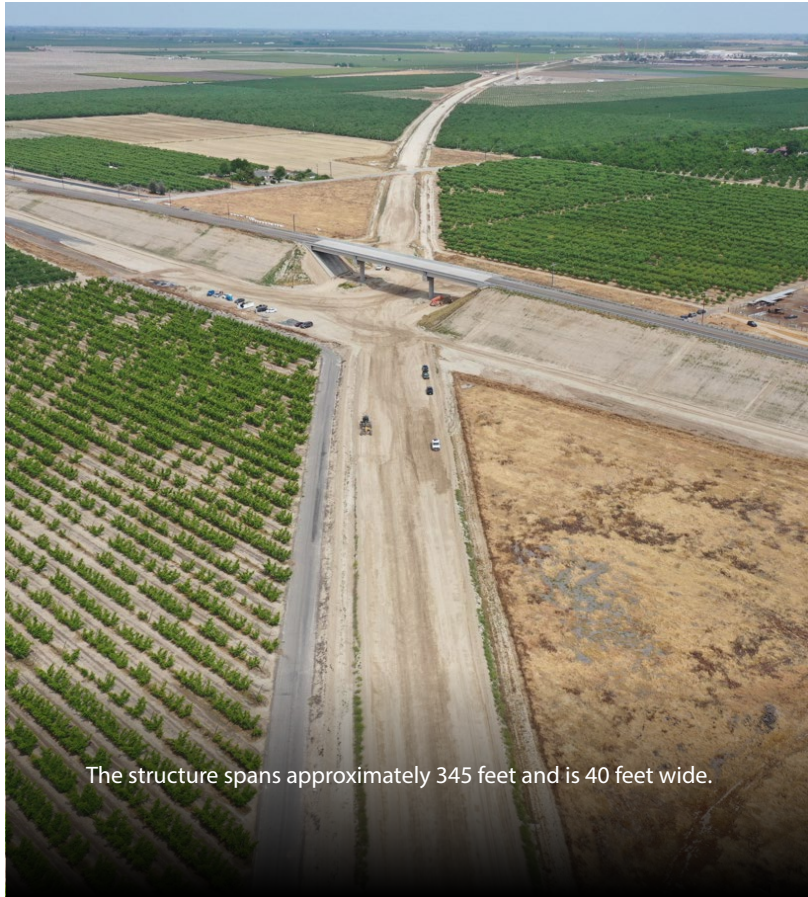


# ELKHORN AVENUE

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



The Elkhorn Avenue overcrossing is located between Clovis and Fowler avenues, south of the city of Fresno.



The structure spans approximately 345 feet and is 40 feet wide.



The structure will serve as a grade separation taking traffic over the future high-speed rail lines.



In July, the Authority, in collaboration with Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture, announced the completion of the Elkhorn Avenue overcrossing in Fresno County.