

Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • Volume 11: Issue 04

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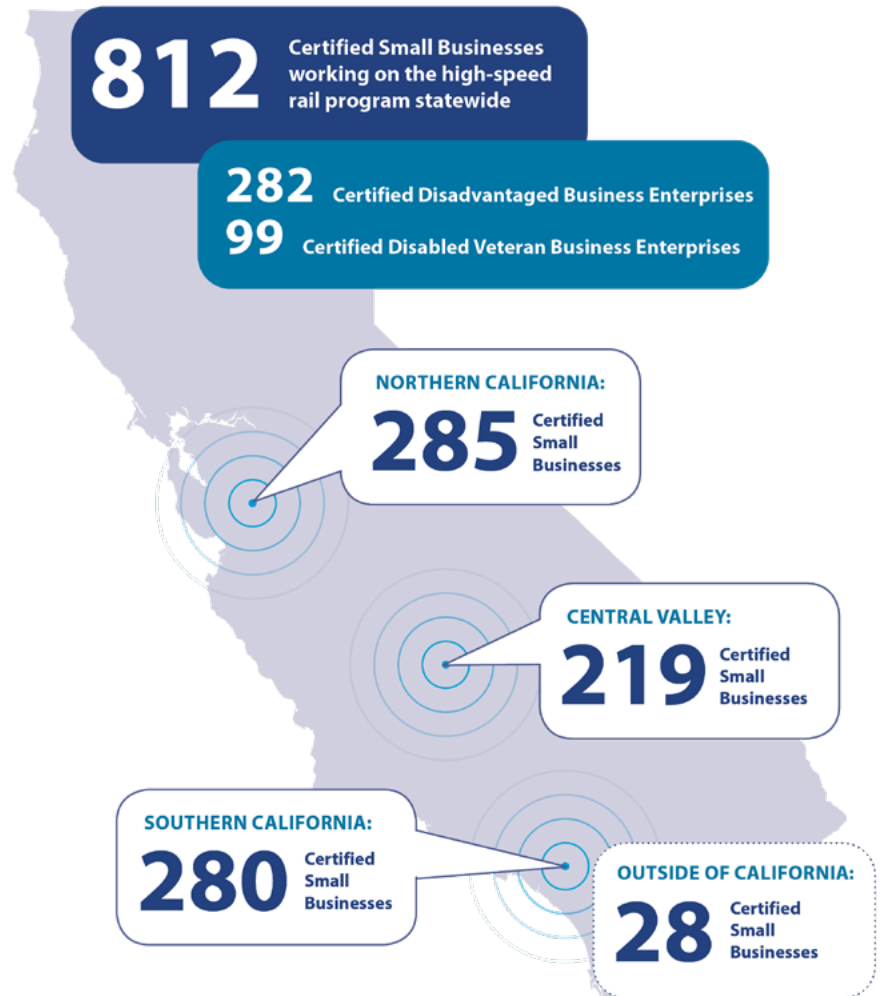
To access and download more information pertaining to the small business program, visit the Small Business Resources webpage at <https://hsr.ca.gov/small-business/>

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:

www.hsr.ca.gov

SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

as of October 2023



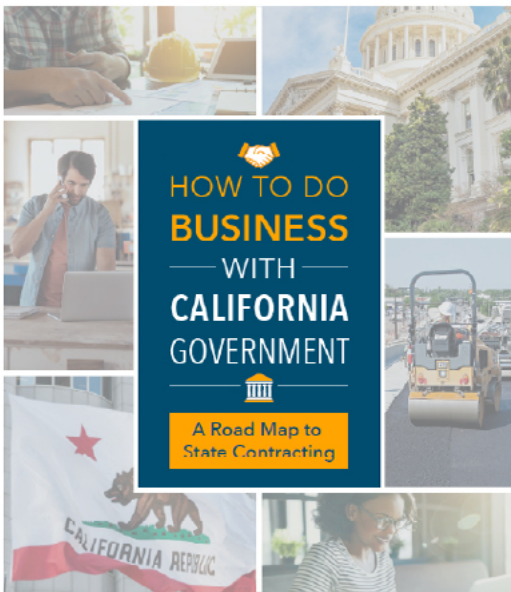
How to Do Business with the State of California

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

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

A Road Map to State Contracting

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES
DGS 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

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

www.score.org

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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 get notified of jobs to bid on?*

When you are ready to look for High-Speed Rail contract and procurement opportunities, they can be found on the Authority's [Contracts Out for Bid](#) webpage. Just like all state agencies, all Authority contracts and procurements opportunities can be viewed in detail on the California Department of General Services' Cal eProcure webpage: www.caleprocure.ca.gov External Link. To learn more about how to do business with High-Speed Rail Authority visit [Get on Board](#).

- *How do I stay informed with Prime's needs (i.e., Bid requests)?*

The Authority hosts pre-bid conferences and industry forums. These public forums highlight the proposed work outlined in a specific Request for Proposal or Request for Qualification. The Small Business Advocate educates potential prime contractors on the Authority's SB Program and goals. For small and diverse businesses, who are interested in subcontract opportunities, these events provide information and an opportunity to meet and greet with potential primes.

Business Advisory Council Profiles



Linden Nishinaga, Asian American Architects/Engineers Association of Southern California

Linden Nishinaga is a California licensed civil engineer and LEED accredited professional. He has worked primarily in the public sector as a design civil, structural, and earthquake engineer; program and project manager; and supervisor on both horizontal and vertical construction projects. Mr. Nishinaga helped initiate public sector MBE/WBE/DBE programs and duly implemented their required goal achievements on projects he's managed. He is a lifelong advocate for a world-class, Shinkansen-level, Los Angeles to San Francisco high-speed rail system for California. Mr. Nishinaga is also a strong advocate for civil rights including those for Asian Pacific Americans and was actively involved in the historic Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Mr. Nishinaga represents the Asian American Architects/Engineers Association of Southern California (AAa/e) on the California High-Speed Rail Authority Business Advisory Council. He serves on the BAC's Professional Services Committee as the current Vice Chair.



Hello out there to all our small business partners! It's been an eventful year, and in the last issue of 2023, I have a lot of good news to share with you all.

Last week, our Board of Directors approved a realignment of our small business goals with State and federal guidelines. This alignment was a long time coming and we appreciate everyone from our small business community and our Business Advisory Council who helped advise us on this process. It also reflects the Assembly Bill 2019, signed by the Governor in September 2022, which codified the state's 25 percent small business goal. After some good discussion, the Board approved to move forward with these recommendations.

Essentially, our small business program goals are now reflected as seen below:

- *For 100 Percent State Funded*
 - A 3% DVBE goal
 - A 25% Small Business goal using all categories that qualify under the state standard, which includes certified Small Business and SB-PW
 - Of that 25%, we will designate 3% microbusiness.
- *For 100 Percent Federal Funded (including grants)*
 - A 17% DBE goal
- *Blended State and Federal*
 - A 3% DVBE goal, which will be applied across the total contract value.
 - A 10% DBE goal, which will also be applied across the total contract value.
 - A 25% Small Business goal on the state portion of the contract, using all categories that qualify under the state standard, which includes Small Business and SB-PW.
 - Of that 25% we will designate 3% microbusiness.

As to next steps, we will be revising our Small Business Program to include updates to relevant Authority policies



Thanks for joining us at our annual Small Business Diversity and Resource Fair. We'll see you next year.

and procedures to incorporate approved changes, and I look forward to me and my team sharing more about this change. I do want to note that these new goals will be applied to new Authority contracts, and they would not apply or be retro-active in application to existing Authority contracts. To learn more about the presentation and to view the video, visit our [Board of Directors site](#).

We also continued to ramp up our participation at events around the state over the last several months and we were even able to host one of our own. In late October, we held a Small Business Diversity and Resource Fair in Sacramento, and we welcomed over 100 attendees. At this event, we were able to provide attendees with opportunities for face-to-face networking and featured project updates, meetings with prime contractors, engaging discussions on project opportunities, and a discussion about how to overcome barriers facing small businesses. All of small businesses out there are essential to building this high-speed rail program and we were happy to see all of your faces. This will be an annual event,

It was an absolute pleasure to be a part of such a well-executed and memorable event as the recent Small Business Diversity and Resource Fair. The attention to detail, meticulous planning, and dedication to ensuring the success of the event were evident throughout. The event's seamless organization, coupled with the outstanding program and speakers, made it truly remarkable. We look forward to following up with the SB/DBE/DVBEs we met with yesterday and building opportunities for the community on this project and others.

-Lauren Jaquith,
Project Delivery Support (PDS) Small Business Officer

Click the image below to see the full video in Youtube:



so keep an eye out for the next one. Check out our video from the event!

I am also excited to share that as of last month we have a new Small Business Advocate! Chardena Valley joined us in October and she will be managing the Small Business, Title VI and Compliance sections of the high-speed rail program. She brings over a decade of public service experience, most recently with Caltrans as the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Manager and has worked closely with small businesses from around



the state. To learn more about her and how excited she is to join my team, please read our Q&A with her on page 16.

We have a lot of procurements that are either out on the street or just around the corner, so it's more important now than ever that you make sure you and your small business are registered with our [ConnectHSR vendor registry](#) so you know about upcoming events and opportunities. You can also sign up for general high-speed rail news on through our [Contact Us page](#). We also have a quick update on procurements later in this article in page 19.

Going forward, I'll be turning this column over to Chardena, but I wanted to end by noting that this newsletter features several profiles of some of our certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBEs) and the work they are doing on this historic project. With Veterans Day around the corner, me and the small business team want to thank them and all veterans for their service.

Enjoy the holidays all!

Small Business Events



[Authority Board of Directors Meeting](#)

December 6, 2023

TBD
Department of Food and Agriculture Auditorium
1220 N. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Board meetings for 2024 will be posted [online](#) when available.

[Small Business Program Business Advisory Council Meeting](#)

November 29, 2023

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Online/Virtual Conference
[Register](#)

Council meetings for 2024 will be posted [online](#) when available.

November 15, 2023

Industry Awareness Day – Upcoming Rail Procurements

1:30 p.m.

California Department of Health Care Services Auditorium
1500 Capitol Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95814

[Register for Event](#)

November 15, 2023

Merced to Madera Project Informational Open House

5:30 p.m - 7:00 p.m.

Merced Civic Center
Samuel Pipes Room
678 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

[More Information](#)

November 15 - November 16, 2023

CoMotion Los Angeles

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Japanese American National Museum
100 N Central Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90012

[Register for Event](#)

December 13, 2023

How To Do Business with High-Speed Rail

11 a.m - 12 p.m.

Online/Virtual

January 16, 2024

How To Do Business with High-Speed Rail

11 a.m - 12 p.m.

Online/Virtual

Speedreads



SPAIN AND MOROCCO PARTNER ON RAILWAY CONNECTION

Spain and Morocco are beginning a revival of the Madrid-Casablanca high-speed rail project across the Strait of Gibraltar, originally launched in 1979. The project, which serves the interests of both countries, was halted by a diplomatic crisis, and is now back online with the two countries planned to host the 2030 World Cup together. Establishing a high-speed rail line is expected to significantly reduce travel time to just 5.5 hours and boost ties between Europe and Africa.



INDONESIAN PRESIDENT TAKES TEST RIDE ON SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY

Indonesian President Joko Widodo took a test ride on [Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway](#). The project under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative cost \$7.3 billion and is largely funded by China. With congestion costing the economy an estimated \$6.5 billion a year, President Widodo urges people to switch from cars to mass transit. The 88.4 mile project is part of a 466 mile high-speed train line that will cut across four provinces on the main island of Java and end in Surabaya. Photo Credit: Akbar Nugroho Gumay/Pool Photo via AP



ITALY TO BRING HIGH-SPEED ROUTE CONNECTING FOUR MAJOR EUROPEAN CAPITALS

With travelers heading to Europe and travel booming, Italy is looking to keep up with the demand. Soon—Italy could have a new high-speed rail route thanks to Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS), Italy's state-owned train operator. FS aims to create a high-speed rail link between Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris and possibly Berlin, with plans to link Paris and Barcelona. On top of creating this new route, FS also is considering adding a touch of luxury to their high-speed rail service—nothing better than traveling with style across Europe!



CHINA BUILDS 1,402 KILOMETERS OF RAILWAY IN 2023

The [China State Railway Group](#) reported that 1,402 kilometers of new railway lines were built in the first three quarters of 2023, among them were 1,276 km of high-speed rail. Rail infrastructure investment has increased by 7.1 percent from last year, reaching \$70.9 billion. This will support new rail line plans including more than 3,000 km in 2023 of which 2,500 km is allocated for high-speed trains. Photo credit: chinadaily.com.cn



INDONESIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL SET TO LAUNCH IN SEPTEMBER

The massive nation of islands, Indonesia, expects to open their inaugural high-speed rail line by the end of this year. The service will travel between Jakarta and the city of Bandung in West Java in about 45 minutes, a journey which usually takes three hours by an ordinary train. They will operate at about 220 miles per hour, like our system. Passengers will have the opportunity to ride for free for two months after launch as an introductory campaign. Commercial operations are expected to start in October of this year, after a spate of delays. Our experiences here in California building this project aren't unique. But as with delays, we and Indonesia also expect to experience the same roaring success of other systems all over the world.



EGYPT HSR PROJECT TO BE INAUGURATED IN 2024

High-speed rail is an attractive transportation mode most everywhere in the world! According to Egypt's Minister of Transport Kamel Al Wazir, the country's high-speed electric train project will be inaugurated by the end of 2024. Like California, the project has committed itself to their trainsets being domestically manufactured. Siemens Mobility, Orascom Construction, and The Arab Contractors signed a contract with the Egyptian National Authority for Tunnels (NAT) to create the sixth largest high-speed rail system in the world. The network, which is estimated to cost about \$11 billion, is distributed over three lines.



BULLET TRAIN TRACK SYSTEM BEGINS BEING LAID IN SURAT

At the end of August, [construction of the first reinforced concrete track bed for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project started in Surat](#). The high-speed rail project in India uses the same track as the Japanese Shinkansen, J-slab ballastless track system. Over 14,000 metric tons of JIS rails and 50 molds for casting track slabs have already been received from Japan, according to a spokesperson from the Ministry of Railways. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project is expected to be functional by August 2026, and with a top speed of 320 kmph (almost 200 mph), it will cover 508 km (316 miles) in nearly three hours. The journey currently takes 8 to 9 hours.

Perseverance Amid a Pandemic

One Veteran's Story of How His Military Background and Working With HSR Empowered Him as a Small Business Owner



Brian Ross, Principal and Managing Director of Ross Infrastructure Development, LLC. It is a Bay Area-based Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) certified small business.

Every Veteran's Day, Brian Ross follows a few traditions. The former U.S. Army Platoon leader calls and checks on soldiers who served in his unit, enjoys some Veteran Day deals with his children, and at the end of the day, serves his family an MRE dinner.

"It's basically the prepackaged meal packs that they give to soldiers out in the field and they're horrible," he said with a laugh.

These small traditions are a means to reflect on his military service and how it has shaped his life now as the Principal and Managing Director of [Ross Infrastructure Development, LLC](#). It is a Bay Area-based Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) certified small business. Presently, it supports KPMG in its financial advisory engagement and oversight role for the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), Ross's first major client.

"The Authority is a major reason why I have my small business and why I've been able to be successful," he said as he reflects how his foundational military experience and leap into entrepreneurship with the Authority aligned.

Ross spent eight years in the U.S. Army, including a year-long tour in Afghanistan leading an engineering unit working on route clearance, searching for Improvised Explosive Devices, and overseeing base construction while facing attacks and threats. In his leadership role, Ross earned a Bronze Star and was named Engineer Platoon Leaders of the Year in 2011.

"The ability to handle stress and being calm under pressure was very important," Ross explained.

Fast forward to 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down many businesses, Ross faced new pressures and threats in a climate of uncertainty just three years into starting his own firm.



In his leadership role, Ross earned a Bronze Star and was named Engineer Platoon Leaders of the Year in 2011 during a tour in Afghanistan with the US Army Corp of Engineers.

"Work pretty much dried up," he said. "Invoices weren't being processed; payments weren't being processed. The state was unsure of what the budget impacts were. There was about a year with no income coming in."



"The ability to handle stress and being calm under pressure was very important," Ross says about his military and DVBE experience with the Authority.

His military training and experience as a DVBE with the Authority shared the qualities of honesty, respect, and integrity; all of which he drew on to persevere through the pandemic.

"You got to keep going and keep moving forward," he said. "I didn't give up and fold the business and go find another job," he said. Instead of giving up, he pivoted and diversified his business.

"When I first started the business, I pretty much waited for contracts and engagements to come to me. I was more passive. Then, going through the pandemic, I really became more proactive and more aggressive about going out there and finding work and trying to grow the business and building relationships," he said.

Working on the high-speed rail project he says will be full of challenges, but it's nothing he shies away from. This large infrastructure project is already positively impacting the economy and veterans like himself.

"I'm really excited to be part of figuring out the funding and financing challenges to make sure that this transformational generational project moves forward," Ross said.

He said DVBE business owners are sometimes treated as a means to fill a quota, but his work with the Authority challenges that. Ross said, "I'm here because I'm an expert in my field. I add value, and it just so happens to check this box."

Van Tieu



Veteran and Woman-Owned, Bancroft Construction Services Provides Environmental Compliance Consulting for HSR Construction



Ashley Driscoll, founder and owner of Bancroft Construction Services

Ashley Driscoll had an interesting start to her career coming up from the Navy. When asked about what was more challenging – being a mom, the Navy, or a business owner - Driscoll candidly admitted being a business owner was the toughest. In an interview, she chuckled in good spirits as she elaborated on the many highs of serving her country, lows that she encountered after leaving service, and the daily challenges she faces as a small business owner.

Ashley Driscoll, the founder and owner of [Bancroft Construction Services](#), graduated from the United States Naval Academy where she earned her Bachelor of Science in 2005. Driscoll served in the United States Navy as a Surface Warfare Officer where she participated in various overseas operations. Such operations consisted of counter-piracy operations from the seas of Somalia to the counter-narcotics operations on USS Thach in South America. After her service, she attended Westminster College where she obtained her Master's in Community Leadership and Sustainability.

Despite having served for her country for more than 5 years, Driscoll found it difficult to land a job.



Ashley and Ethan with kids at Montessori in uniform



Ashley Driscoll with a colleague during the Humanitarian Disaster Exercise in the Middle East

“I just had my two kiddos... and after two years and I still couldn’t get a job. I couldn’t get in anywhere,” said Driscoll.

In 2017, Driscoll decided to take fate into her own hands by starting Bancroft Construction Services alongside two other employees, one being her husband. Driscoll shyly admitted the name Bancroft Construction services came from Bancroft Hall, the United States’ largest dormitory at the U.S Naval Academy where Driscoll and her husband met.

“It’s where I kind of got into leadership and launched everything,” Driscoll revealed.

The company has since experienced remarkable growth since launching. Now with a staff of forty-eight employees, Bancroft provides various services such as stormwater management, biological and cultural monitoring, and Best Management Practices (BMP) installations. Bancroft Construction Services has offices in Yucaipa and Bakersfield, and provide services across California between San Diego and Sacramento, and even to Clark County in the State of Nevada.

Today, Bancroft Construction Services is currently working on Construction Package (CP) 4 and CP 2-3 with biological and cultural monitoring, pre-construction surveys, and sensitive species trapping. With the Central Valley experiencing heavy rain in early 2023, Bancroft has also started to work in storm water management in CP 1.

When asked about what makes their business unique, Driscoll explained that it was the opportunities provided to their employees. “We are constantly cross-training folks so that it gives them an opportunity to build a different career path,” Driscoll shared.

She added that some biologists within the company are training to become Qualified SWPPP Practitioners (QSPs). Nicole Blackhawk, a Senior Biologist, confirmed, “This is the company that gave me the opportunity to be able to step in some other roles that I was trying to work to pursue before.”

Blackhawk was given the opportunity to cross-train and found that it was incredibly beneficial for her career goals.

Driscoll highlights the positive impact that the high-speed rail project has given the community and businesses. “The amount of opportunities that it has provided communities, businesses, and people in general has been extraordinary. It has been life changing for a lot of people, myself included,” reflected the Chief Executive Officer.

Bancroft Construction Services stands as an example of the values instilled into those who served. Their commitment to their work and customers has shown through their work on the high-speed rail project. As a certified Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (DVBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), and Women-Owned Enterprise (WBE), Bancroft continues today to make significant contributions to the project.

Augie Blancas



Mapping Tomorrow



Calvada Surveying Inc. founder, Armando DuPont, examining documents and plans associated with a land surveying project during the 2000s.

In 1972, Armando DuPont wasn't thinking about starting a land surveying company. Events for the history books were unfolding around him, even if their importance didn't have the same weight they hold now in retrospect. A space race. Ongoing global conflict. And if you're into the record books – the only perfect NFL season.

While the nation and world were taking shape around him, November 1972 marked the start of an experience that would shape and teach him lessons that would later influence how he operates [Calvada Surveying Inc.](#) (Calvada) – he was drafted into the Army.

"My Army experience is one that I would not miss in my life," DuPont said.

DuPont was assigned to the First Infantry Division in Fort Riley, Kansas. At Fort Riley, DuPont received training

for numerous functions and skills to serve as a chemical, biological and radiological technician in the event of a deployment. In other words, "In charge of the flame-throwers, the injections for any biological damage incurred, gas masks, etc.," DuPont said.

DuPont toured Germany for NATO exercises before he was honorably discharged and served as a reservist for another five years. His time in the Army left him with a lasting impression, experiencing growth and instilling the stamina and maturity to keep moving forward – traits that helped him

steer the ship at Calvada for more than three decades.

Founded in December 1988, 16 years after being drafted to the Army, DuPont left his position with a civil engineering company as he envisioned a business of his own to provide better and faster land surveying and aerial photogrammetry mapping services to clients.

Like any new business, obtaining clientele was one of the biggest obstacles. "My biggest challenge was to convince anyone, future client[s], to trust me," he said.

The right mentality and the stamina to move forward helped DuPont leap over that obstacle – figuratively this time, in contrast to the literal obstacle leaping during basic training in the years prior.

Finding clients isn't much of a challenge these days. The full-service land surveying company has offices across California and other western states.

Over the years, DuPont and Calvada have been the lead surveyors for large infrastructure projects within



(Top left): Photo collage of sites where Calvada has provided land surveying and mapping services; (Bottom left): Calvada Surveying Inc. staff and work sites throughout the 1990s; (right): Calvada Surveying Inc. staff and work sites throughout the 2000s.

California, providing highly detailed topographic surveys and boundary analysis for many miles of Interstate 605, State Route 60, Interstate 10 and Interstate 5. They were even the first surveyors on site for Disney’s California Adventure Park – well before a single patron enjoyed a famed churro or turkey leg there.

Calvada uses the latest land surveying technology, including drone surveying and high-definition surveying (HDS), also known as 3D laser scanning. This powerful technology allows Calvada to quickly provide accurate 3D drawings.

For the California High-Speed Rail project, Calvada works on the Fresno to Bakersfield project section. California’s varied terrain and landscape require innovative engineering and land mapping when planning and designing high-speed rail across regions.

The significance of working on the nation’s largest infrastructure project and first high-speed rail system isn’t lost on DuPont. “I like it. It will be something we can brag about,” he said.

DuPont remains confident in the future of the company he founded nearly 35 years ago and still finds himself saying yes to any work opportunities that come his way. It’s all about pushing through to achieve a goal.

“Attitude is half the battle,” DuPont says as he shares the most important lesson he learned during his time in the Army. “If one applies this to everything we do, it opens the doors everywhere. Always approach every problem with the right attitude and a solution”.

Anthony Stijepovic



The Authority Welcomes Chardena Valley as the Authority's Small Business Advocate



Chardena Valley, Small Business Advocate

The California High-Speed Rail Authority welcomes Chardena Valley as the Authority's new Small Business Advocate. Chardena will be managing the Small Business, Title VI and Compliance sections.

A proud California native, Chardena is a mother of two energetic boys who has learned to balance the demands of family life with her professional pursuits. She shares that her journey as a state employee has been both rewarding and fulfilling.

She has dedicated the last 10 years of her career to public service as a state employee. Her most recent experience includes working for Caltrans as the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Certification Manager, helping small businesses navigate the certification process and supporting their growth.

Additionally, she brings expertise in Human Resources, playing a pivotal role in fostering a positive work environment and facilitating the growth of the workforce and making a positive impact in her community.

During her time in public service, she's had the opportunity to collaborate closely with small businesses. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fostering economic growth is a passion of hers.

"I look forward to continuing my journey as the Small Business Advocate, striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around me," says Chardena.

Q: Welcome aboard, Chardena! Can you share with us what is your role with the Authority?

My role as the Small Business Advocate is to champion the interests and concerns of small businesses within the context of high-speed rail projects. This involves promoting fair and inclusive opportunities for small businesses to participate in projects, fostering partnerships, and assisting with access to contracts, resources and information. I also monitor compliance with regulations and support the economic development of local communities along the rail route. I am dedicated to the success of both the Authority's mission and the small business community in achieving a mutually beneficial outcome.

Q: What attracted you to apply with the department?

I was drawn to apply with the Authority due to my passion for supporting small businesses and promoting sustainable transportation solutions. The potential to play a vital role in fostering growth and development within the small business community greatly appealed to me. Additionally, the prospect of being part of a transformative infrastructure project like the high-speed rail excited me, as it aligns with my desire to contribute to innovative, forward-thinking initiatives that have an impact on society.

Q: How long have you been in your field? What do you love most about your job/career?

I've been working with small businesses for approximately five years, and what I love most about my career is the opportunity to foster economic growth and innovation. Collaborating with small businesses to develop and implant projects that benefit both the community, and the environment is incredibly rewarding. The dynamic nature of this job keeps me engaged, as I continually face new challenges and learn from the experiences of these hardworking entrepreneurs.

Q: Can you share with us your career background/expertise in the field?

I have a diverse background in assisting small businesses in the cannabis industry with licensing and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification. I've worked closely with entrepreneurs looking to navigate the complex regulatory landscape of manufacturing and distributing cannabis products. My expertise includes helping clients understand and meet the stringent requirements for obtaining licenses and permits in this highly regulated field. Furthermore, I've guided small businesses through the process of obtaining DBE certification, which is crucial for assessing government contracts and resources. This involves guiding them through the application process, providing strategic advice, and ensuring they meet the criteria to be recognized as a DBE. My commitment to staying updated on evolving regulations has been pivotal in assisting small businesses to thrive in their market while maintaining compliance with legal requirements.

Q: What advice would you give someone that wants to work in your field?

To succeed in this field, embrace continuous learning, stay curious and practice effective communication. Develop strong problem-solving skills, adaptability, and resilience to handle challenges. Understand the unique challenges small businesses face and be a resource for them. Engage with your community, join relevant associations, and stay up-to-date with the industry trends. Remember, empathy and a passion for helping small businesses thrive are your most valuable assets.

Q: What has been one of your biggest career accomplishments/Successes?

One of my biggest career accomplishments was successfully transitioning a manual application processing system to an electronic one, leading to a substantial reduction in processing time. This streamlined and efficient approach greatly improved productivity and enhanced the overall performance of the Office of Civil Rights.

Q: What do you look forward to working on as a member of the California High-Speed Rail Authority Business Team?

I'm eager to champion small businesses' growth and engagement within the high-speed rail project, fostering collaboration, supporting opportunities, and ensuring their success in this transformative initiative for California's infrastructure and economy.

Q: What are your upcoming goals/career accomplishments you hope to achieve in the next year/years?

My upcoming goals include enhancing accessibility to resources for entrepreneurs, fostering stronger networking opportunities, and promoting policies that support the growth and sustainability of small enterprises. I aim to actively engage with stakeholders to drive positive changes, advocate for equitable funding options, and provide educational initiatives that empower small businesses to thrive in the coming years.

Q: Anything else you would like to share?

I'm thrilled to join the Authority as the Small Business Advocate. This opportunity excites me beyond words. I can't wait to contribute my passion for small businesses, my dedication to their success and my commitment to advocating for their needs. Working alongside like-minded individuals who share this enthusiasm will undoubtedly lead to a dynamic and impactful journey. I'm eagerly looking forward to making a meaningful difference in the small business community and achieving our collective goals.

Authority Staff Attends Caltrans 3rd Annual DBE Summit



Small Business Outreach Coordinator Damon Dorn speaking with Toks Omishakin, Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency (CALSTA) during the 3rd Annual DBE Summit.

Authority team members were on site at Caltrans' 3rd Annual DBE Summit in Richmond. The in-person event drew hundreds of contractors, suppliers, and consultants who are eligible to become or currently certified as a DBE. Secretary of Transportation

Toks Omishakin stopped at our booth to chat with Small Business team member Damon Dorn. This event gave Authority staff the opportunity to engage with small businesses so they can learn how to work on the nation's first electrified high-speed rail system!

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Procurement Update

At the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), we're working towards a 2030-2033 operational high-speed rail segment in the Central Valley – and we're keenly aware of the numerous procurement milestones necessary to achieve this goal.

In August, our [Board of Directors approved a Request for Qualifications \(RFQ\)](#) for the supply-maintain contract for our first high-speed trainsets. This was a momentous first step that puts us on track to procure our initial trainsets pending federal investment in the project. This is the first step of a two-step process. The second step will be the release of the request for proposals. In conjunction with this work – our Early Train Operator in coordination with Rail Ops and Strategic Communications continue the exciting process of engaging stakeholders and the public on the specifications needed to design the interiors of our trainsets, and we provided our Board of Directors with a sneak peek in June. We are continuing to engage with the public in this process here in Sacramento over the next several months on these designs.

By the middle of 2024, we are working to seek Board approval on at least seven related contracts for release. These include both the design and construction of our tracks and overhead contact system, the next step in trainset procurements (called a Request for Proposal, or RFP), other systems like signaling, as well as support contracts like Independent Cost Estimator (ICE), Construction Manager, Integration Support, and Independent Safety Assessor (ISA). Each of these contracts will use

slightly different procurement methods and will incorporate past lessons learned to enhance our performance going forward.

Last week, our [Board of Directors approved the release of a Request for Qualifications \(RFQ\)](#) to industry for design services for track and overhead contact systems (OCS) for the initial 171-mile passenger service connecting Merced to Bakersfield. With a total contract value of up to \$131.2 million and potential extension options, this procurement process will allow the Authority to:

- *Produce high-level designs for track and systems for the 171-miles connecting Merced to Bakersfield, including detailed designs for the 119-mile stretch currently under active construction within that Central Valley stretch.*
- *Design the track system, including the track structure, OCS, along-track cable containment, across-track ducts, access walkways, fencing, and drainage.*
- *Manage technical and non-technical interfaces with interfacing contractors/consultants.*

With all of this exciting news, it's now more important than ever of you and your business to stay up to date on procurements at the Authority. There are several steps you can take:

- *Make sure your business is registered with our online ConnectHSR Vendor Registration system [here](#).*
- *[Sign up](#) on our email lists to get the latest Board of Directors agendas, news releases, about industry events and what the latest news is with the program.*
- *Make sure you sign up for industry events. We have an [Industry Awareness Day](#) coming up on November 15 for upcoming rail procurements that will be in person and have virtual options.*

You can also contact our prime contractors through their small business contracts:

- **Lauren Jaquith, AECOM-FLUOR**
Lauren.jaquith@hsr.ca.gov
- **Sergio Callen, SYSTR**
scallen@systra.com

Track design, civil engineering, OCS design, EMC/EMI, contract administration, estimating, scheduling, CPUC safety certification, survey, quality assurance, etc.

- **Paul Garcia, SmithGroup, Inc.**
paul.garcia@smithgroup.com

Areas we could use more expertise on:

- *GIS mapping/analysis*
- *Transportation Planning/Analysis*
- *MEP*
- *Land Use Planning*
- *Environmental Report*
- *Building Management Systems*
- **Bjorn Nilsen, Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture**
bnilsen@dfcp23.com

Construction services and construction material suppliers

- **Ricky Estrada, DB E.C.O North America**
ricky.estrada@db-eco.us

Support in development of customer journey, development of archetypes, conduct market research

- **Jeanette Delijani, HNTB**
jdeljani@hntb.com



KANSAS AVENUE OVERCROSSING

LATEST VIDEOS: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEEDRAIL



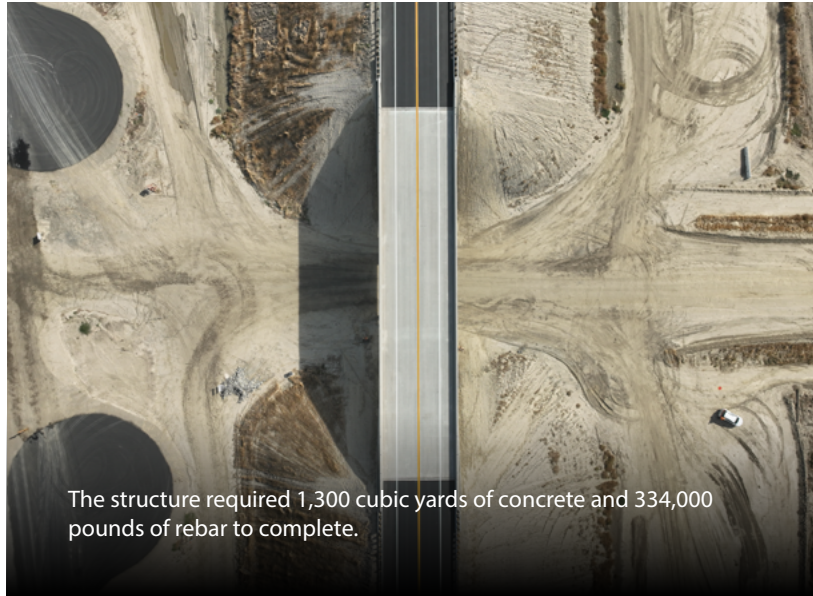
In November, the Authority, in collaboration with Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV), announced the completion and opening of the Kansas Avenue overcrossing to traffic.



This grade separation is located west of State Route 43 in Kings County.



The overcrossing spans approximately 207 feet long and 43 feet wide.



The structure required 1,300 cubic yards of concrete and 334,000 pounds of rebar to complete.



It also required 12 pre-cast concrete girders, all manufactured at the DFJV Pre-Cast Girder Facility in Hanford.



The Kansas Avenue overcrossing is the ninth Central Valley structure the Authority has completed in 2023.