



the BUSINESS CURVE

ADVANCING MINORITY & SMALL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

FALL/WINTER 2023

**One-on-One Interview with
Nathaniel Durant,
CEO & Founder, ND3, Inc.
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Cover: Border Rebar, LLC (DBE) was actively placing the steel structure for bridge No. 35 known as the Unit #10 Bridge Superstructure. The new connector runs from the East of I-126 near Colonial Life Blvd. to I-26 West (US-378) near Lexington Hospital in Carolina Crossroad Phase 1 (CCR1).
 Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson.

Greetings,

The phrase “knowledge is power” was attributed to Francis Bacon and often used by Thomas Jefferson centuries ago. This short slogan is still frequently proclaimed today. Knowledge empowers you to be less dependent on others, which routinely allows you to command more respect and boosts your self-esteem. In addition, knowledge gives you the power to be informed, make sound decisions or to act, and to plan ahead. In this edition of the Business Curve, we hope to provide you with knowledge in each of these areas. You will be informed about current and upcoming projects like Carolina Crossroads and the I-95/I-26 Interchange Improvements. We anticipate you will be able to render more intelligent actions after reading articles on how to get paid faster, how to report work once you receive a SCDOT contract, and adhere to jobsite safety practices. Lastly, we have included articles that will better equip you to plan for future opportunities being afforded in Right of Way acquisitions and the bidding process.



Thank you for investing time in reading this edition of the Business Curve. We trust that the information we have provided will not only inform but also encourage you. If that is the case, we invite you to share it with others who might benefit. In addition, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any comments, topic ideas or suggestions you feel will enhance this publication.

Best regards,

Greg Davis

Division Director, Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs



Thank you to our amazing contributors and we are excited about our new partnership with Graphic Designer, Zoe Cook in the Office of Public Engagement.

Best regards,

Mary Wyeth

Editor, the Business Curve

One-on-One Interview with Nathaniel Durant, CEO & Founder, ND3, Inc.



Nathaniel Durant, CEO and Founder, ND3, Inc.

1. Tell readers a little about your business.

ND3 Inc is a government services firm that has three main sections: IT support, Overseas Logistics, and Drone Services. The Drone Services is the focus of this particular article. ND3 Inc. is a SCDOT vendor providing pilot training and FAA license prep to local DBE in trainings offered by the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs' (MSBA) Business Development Center.

2. How long have you been in business?

The business was established in 2018, but I didn't actively start working the business until I retired in 2020.

3. What made you choose this type of business?

I've been building and operating drones since 2009 as a hobby; I also really enjoy flying. When the FAA came out with new rules and regulations plus a licensing structure, I saw the need to become an instructor in order to help others pass the test.

4. What service(s) or product(s) do you offer/manufacture?

On the drone services side of the house, we offer everything from FAA Part 107 test prep to construction monitoring. We have several drones that are capable of photogrammetry and mapping. These services are very useful in the construction industry.

5. Where did the name come from?

ND3 Inc is a condensed version of my name, Nathaniel Durant III. The 3 also represents the 3 verticals of the business; Government Services, Logistics, and Drone Services

6. How many employees do you have?

We currently have 10 employees.

7. What is unique about your business?

The unique part of the drone academy is that we teach students to fly drones, educate them about best practices on how to operate a drone rather than simply prep them for the exam. The FAA exam is a 60 question exam and in theory, any person can study for the exam, pass it, and become a licensed drone pilot without actual experience operating or maintaining a drone!

8. How long have you been a DBE?

I've been a DBE since 2020

9. Why did you choose the DBE program?

I chose this program because I felt that the MSBA offered the best assistance with getting a new business off of the ground.

10. What are your responsibilities as the business owner?

I'm responsible for everything and every person's wellbeing in the business. This includes HR, payroll, scheduling, accounting, business development, management. It's exhausting at first, but it's necessary for the business to thrive.

11. What has been your greatest accomplishment so far being a part of the SCDOT DBE program?

My greatest accomplishment is being a part of the SCDOT MSBA team that provides training to other DBEs in the form of the Drone Academy.

12. How has the SCDOT helped your business grow?

SCDOT has helped in two ways. Mainly by contracting me to offer the Drone Academy to other DBEs. The Drone Academy has been a hit and continues to fill up fast when it is offered. The second way is by the exposure to the DBEs in the classes who spread the work about the capabilities of drones to other DBEs and their staff.



Nathaniel Durant, ND3 owner and Drone Academy instructor, explains drone controller calibrations and preferences available in smart phone app.



Ready for their certification test! L-R: Mike Tadros, Carolina Microwave Associates, Inc.; Deona Adams, IIVE Solutions, LLC; Marty King, Melk Mechanical, LLC; Natia Ridges, TT&L, Inc.; Stephanie Smith, MLS, Inc.; Nat Durant, ND3, Inc.

13. What are some, if any, of your most complex contracts since being certified?

Nothing too terribly complex at the moment. Everything has been standardized and fairly easy to accomplish.

14. What would you say to other businesses that are considering DBE certification?

I would say that this is a great opportunity to jump start your business and to get the necessary training and certifications necessary to thrive in your industry.

15. What is your long-term business goal?

Simple, to have a viable multi-million dollar business within 5 years of retirement. Check back with me in 2025! (Spoiler alert, the glide path is there!)

16. What do you attribute your success to in the DBE program?

Well, you have to participate. There are a lot of trainings and webinars that they offer so you have to make time and make yourself available to take advantage of everything that they have to offer.

17. What was your experience to be a small DBE Prime Contractor doing a project for the SCDOT?

I have nothing but positive things to say. It was text book contracting. They contracted me to do a job, I did the job, and they paid on time. Textbook! I love it!

18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I would like to thank the DBE Staff for reaching out to me to host the Part 107 Drone Academy and for also spotlighting my business in this issue of the Business Curve Newsletter!



Participants fine-tune their drone navigational skills by flying them through an obstacle course. L-R: Nat Durant, Natia Ridges, Deona Adams, and Marty King. Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth.

CONGRATULATIONS NEWLY CERTIFIED DBES! FEBRUARY 1, 2023 - JULY 31, 2023

1st and Goal Hauling, Inc.

24K Hauling, Inc.

4N Hauling, LLC

Absolute Staffing & Consulting Solutions, LLC

Ackerman & Baynes, LLC

Amp Utility Distribution Services, LLC

Aquanti, LLC

Better Dayz Trucking, LLC

BG Industrial, LLC - SBE

Bridge Tech Global, LLC

Casewell & Francisco, LLC

CBM Loadrunner Logistics, LLC

CF Hauling, LLC

CKG Hauling, LLC

Cruz Landscaping & Concrete, LLC

Electric Connection, LLC

Electrical by Judy, LLC

Elite Paradigm, LLC

F. Jones Logistics, LLC

Firehouse Fleet Solutions, LLC

Garland & Associates Enterprise, LLC

Here For You Logistics, LLC

HRSP Solutions, LLC

International Transport & Construction, LLC

Interoptek, Inc.

Iron Elk, LLC

JCM & Associates, Inc. dba Blue Goose Uniforms

Jireh Contracting, Inc.

JPCO, Inc.

K S Trucking, LLC

Keitt Consulting, LLC

Lawrence Construction, LLC

Lebby Consulting, LLC

Marty Elazer Capp King Mechanical, LLC

Metro Striping Solutions, LLC

MLM-Martin Architects, Inc.

Multisphere Enterprise, LLC

Nate Johnson & Sons Trucking, LLC

North America Trucking and Logistics, LLC

NR Grading & Hauling, LLC

P & B Promotionals

PEI Engineering, LLC

PureSky, LLC

R & G Construction, LLC

R. Perry Enterprises, LLC

Rock Solid Trucking, LLC

Rocky Branch Utilities - SBE

Romana, LLC

RoVolus, LLC

Savvy Business Solutions, LLC - SBE

SB & E Transport, LLC

SC Transport, LLC

See Me Trucking, LLC

Self Care Logistics, LLC

Soteria Trucking Company

Spiky Haired Lady Cleaning Service

Symbology DC, LLC

T.D.I.R. Inc. DBA TDIR, Inc.

Tate's Roofing & Carpentry

The D Graham Group, LLC

Timely Transportation & Logistics, Inc.

Tra'Co Logistics, LLC

Tri-Built, Inc.

TutwielerDawkins, LLC

VIAS Infrastructure, PLLC

Wallace Notary Services

2023 Summer Transportation Institute at Allen University

By Barbara Beagles, Director, Office of Civil Rights Programs



Students consider a physics lesson offered by Randy Young, SCDOT's chief engineer for project delivery.

Photos courtesy of Allen University.

The 2023 Summer Transportation Institute (STI) was held on the campus of Allen University located in Columbia, South Carolina, from June 5 through June 28, 2023. The program consisted of nine students, 9th through 10th grade, representing eight high schools in South Carolina.

STI, a Federal Highway Administration program initiative, was created to bring awareness of and expose middle and high school students to career opportunities in the transportation industry. South Carolina is considered the “birth state” of STI because the first program was held on the campus of South Carolina State University in 1993. Since that time, the STI has expanded from a single university to multiple colleges and universities throughout the country.

STI is comprised of three components: academic, enhancement, and sports/recreation. Each component provides a stimulating

introduction to the field of transportation, motivates students towards professions in the industry, as well as enhances leadership and teamwork skills. The academic curriculum emphasizes the importance of safety and provides exposure to all modes of transportation including land, air, water, and rail. During the program, students engaged in activities that assisted in gaining unique exposure to the transportation industry. Transportation professionals provided presentations about transportation career options, highway construction projects and safety. Students attended field studies at the Challenger Learning Center, the South Carolina Department of Transportation Traffic Management Center, Boeing of South Carolina, Clemson University, and Charleston Railroad Museum. The enhancement component consisted of ACT preparation, leadership skills, and teambuilding.

The Culminating Ceremony was held on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. Students provided highlights of lessons learned while participating in the STI. The occasion was celebrated by staff, representatives from SCDOT, FHWA and parents. STI continues to serve as a mechanism that prepares our future workforce for rewarding careers in the transportation industry.



Traffic control management while behind the truck driver's wheel simulator.



While teammates look on, a student releases their model in an attempt to replicate the team's prediction.

Get Paid Faster

By Ashton Williams, Sr., DBE Technical Advisor, Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and Automated Clearing House (ACH) are modern and efficient ways of handling your financial transactions. There is a common misperception that the terms are interchangeable; they are not. Actually, “the terms ACH and EFT are not interchangeable, but are closely related. ACH transfers are a type of EFT, and EFTs include ACH transfers but are not limited to them” (stripe.com). Both EFT and ACH are secure and reliable electronic payment types that allow individuals and companies to send and receive funds directly between bank accounts without needing paper checks, physical cash or waiting for postal mail delivery.

There are multiple benefits to using EFT and ACH. Speed and efficiency is a hallmark of both. For example, payments from prime contractors are processed much faster than traditional methods. You can send and receive funds within hours or, in some cases, the same day, compared to days or weeks with checks. Also, using EFT/ACH makes it possible for Technical Assistance staff to easily track prompt payments to ensure DBE firms are being paid on time.

- Improved cash flow results from timely payments which allows for better cash flow management.
- Enhanced security -- EFT/ACH utilizes state-of-the-art security measures, minimizing the risks associated with lost or stolen checks.
- Easy Recordkeeping: Digital transactions are easier to track and reconcile making tax season a breeze.
- Environmentally Friendly: EFT/ACH promotes sustainability and helps protect the environment by reducing paper usage.

If you're interested in getting paid faster, why not take the next step. If you have any questions or want to get started, please contact your financial institution. Also, talk to the prime contractor you are working with about utilizing EFT/ACH for payment.

A great resource is the National Automated Clearing House Association (Nacha) which is an independent organization that operates and governs the ACH network. Find out more by visiting its website: <https://www.nacha.org/>

2023 Engineers Conference



Stephanie Smith, MLS, Inc. and Cyrus Sinor, IPW Survey & Engineering, PLLC Inc. were invited DBE presenters on SCDOT's Prompt Payment Requirements panel.

L-R: Leland Colvin, Cyrus Sinor, Nicholas Pizzuti, Clay Richter, Greg Davis, and Stephanie Smith (presenting).



Amanda Chandler and Matt DeWitt of Robbins & DeWitt, LLC.



Mark Mohr of Three Oaks Engineering.



Wilson Ferguson Associates, LLC L-R: Leilany Brunson, Caroline Hill, Julie Ferguson.

Photos courtesy of Office of Public Engagement.

One-DOT University Transportation Summit

By Rob Thompson, Director of Production, Office of Public Engagement



L-R: SCSU Student Moderator Bailey Scott of Columbia, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association Director of Safety Programs Patrick Nemms, USDOT Associate Administrator Keith Benjamin, SCDOT Division Director of Minority and Small Business Affairs Greg Davis, Executive Director of USDOT Mid-South Atlantic Region Small Business Transportation Resource Center Joe Jackson and USDOT Director of Civil Rights Irene Marion.

SCDOT Division Director of Minority and Small Business Affairs Greg Davis participated in the panel discussion at South Carolina State University (SCSU) during the One-DOT University Transportation Summit on September 7, 2023. The event focused on revitalizing awareness of the transportation industry among students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and opportunities for collaborative pathways to careers in transportation.

The SCDOT Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs helps small and disadvantaged firms (SBE and DBE) become certified and assists them with marketing and business development. Davis pointed out the four criteria for the two certifications and elaborated on partnership building between South Carolina’s HBCU and both US and local DOTs), student internships, technical assistance available to certified DBEs, and education and outreach training for small transportation firms and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Davis explained how the SCDOT Summer Intern program opens career opportunities for undergraduate students. Several HBCUs already participate in the program. In fact, several staff members in his office came through the summer internship program. He also recognized Allen University for hosting this year’s Summer Transportation Institute (STI), a six-week summer program that exposes high school students to opportunities in all modes of transportation. Claflin University, Benedict College and SCSU also have hosted the program in the past.

SCDOT had a table during the conference on both September 6 and 7, 2023. Alex Bennett, Teiyanna Chandler, Russell Earle, and D’mont Zeigler represented the agency and talked with college students about careers at SCDOT. The purpose of the table at the summit was to provide information on the career opportunities that SCDOT has to offer.



SCDOT employees at the One DOT University Transportation Summit at South Carolina State University on Sept. 7, 2023. Alex Bennett and Teiyanna Chandler represented SCDOT and told college students about careers at SCDOT. Photos courtesy of Rob Thompson.

Summer Interns

SCDOT's summer internship in the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs (MSBA) is designed to provide interns a general exposure to all MSBA programs in addition to special projects for the Division Director's staff. Interns attend meetings, workshops, outreach events, and training sessions related to Civil Rights Programs while learning, assisting, and aiding in the specific work of each unit within the Division. The robust schedule and related responsibilities immerse interns in a dynamic workplace and professional culture.



A highlight of the internship is a field visit to SCDOT's compliance partner the Federal Highway Administration, SC Division.

L-R: MSBA Division Director, Greg Davis; FHWA Civil Rights Specialist, Yolanda Morris, Summer Interns: Tiye Whitaker, Yasmine Price; FHWA Deputy Division Administrator, Shundreka Givan, FHWA Administrator, Emily Lawton.

Photo courtesy of Greg Davis.

2023 Survey Summary - DBEs and the Bidding Process

By Gary Linn, Director, DBE Mega Projects Support, Compliance & Technical Assistance



Firms certified as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) play a crucial role in the construction and design of most roads, bridges and highways in South Carolina. The goal of the DBE program is to promote equal opportunities for all firms bidding our projects. In an effort to provide the best possible service the Division of Minority & Small Business Affairs (MSBA) conducted a survey this summer to identify areas where we can improve our efforts. Our survey reflects the opinions and perspectives of the twenty-one DBE firms who participated.

The majority of the firms stated they actively bid on SCDOT projects each month, with varying degrees of success. The remaining firms felt it was not advantageous for them to bid as they were rarely successful, felt most prime contractors already had DBE firms identified before bidding and believed prime contractors usually subcontract with the same DBE firms they have used in the past. Two firms indicated they did not bid much as many projects were outside their geographical area of operation.

We concentrated on how well DBE firms communicate with prime contractors. Specifically, how did they interact with prime contractors? Firms relayed everything from little to no direct interaction with primes to only during “meet and greet” opportunities. Some firms indicated they normally submit a quote electronically and hope to be selected. Occasionally, they hear back from a prime contractor for clarification of their quote, but rarely did they hear from a prime if they were awarded the contract until the start of the project. We also asked if the DBE firms had met in-person with any prime contractors to introduce their company, discuss the needs of a prime contractor or the DBE's capabilities. Only three firms stated they had.

Overall, our results are in-line with the status quo, DBE firms in the construction and engineering fields are providing quotes to prime contractors but aren't as successful as they can be. MSBA, through our DBE Technical Assistance unit and Business Development Center, work with all DBE firms to improve their success submitting quotes with prime contractors. Through discussions with many of our prime contractors, communication has been identified as vital to being successful paired with fair and reasonable quotes and demonstrated reliability.

MSBA recommends all firms to actively reach out to prime contractors long before they intend to submit a quote. Develop a professional relationship with the company's project managers and senior estimators. Provide them with a well written capability statement that lists your experience, capabilities, equipment and current contact information. Set up an in-person meeting and be ready to “convince” them of the value you bring to the project and their company. Then, when you submit a quote, they will know you and your company. It may take a meeting and a follow-up call or two but the efforts may pay off in the end. Our Technical Advisors are here to guide and assist you in your pursuit. The Business Development Center periodically offers training on capabilities statements. MSBA publishes a monthly potential plan holders list and maintains a list of each prime contractors and which counties they typically bid in. We offer assistance in a variety areas from training and education, on-site technical assistance, marketing and business practices to identifying financial institutions who work with small firms.

SCDOT Right of Way Roundtable

By Mike Barbee, Director, Right of Way

On June 29, 2023, the SCDOT’s Right of Way and the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs held a right of way roundtable discussion with various small- and minority-business representatives of the transportation industry. The roundtable provided an opportunity for SCDOT to explain the right of way acquisition/relocation, and appraisals processes in greater detail and



Mike Barbee addresses roundtable participants.
Photos courtesy of James Cooper.

to provide information on upcoming opportunities for participation in future projects. The issues discussed and the exchange of information was extremely beneficial to the stakeholders. SCDOT looks forward to continuing to work with our small business and minority business partners on transportation projects.

For more information about upcoming opportunities visit:

<https://www.scdot.org/business/right-of-way.aspx>



Delicia Wingard networked with two DBE owners after the conclusion of presentations. L-R: Summer Massey, Owner, Freehold Focus, LLC, Delicia Wingard, SCDOT-MSBA, and Phyllis Houston, President, VESTA Acquisitions, Inc.

DBE Reporting Requirements Reminders

By Carolyn Burton, Ashley Porter and Alyssia Glenn, DBE Reporting and Data Management

Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed and confused when completing required DBE quarterly report documents? Completing any kind of report can feel like a cumbersome task. However, the DBE Reporting and Data Management (DBERDM) unit at SCDOT assures customers that technical assistance is just a telephone call away. DBERDM staff are available to assist customers with completing required reports successfully as mandated by state and federal regulations. DBERDM’s mission is to identify the DBE reporting requirements, provide excellent customer service, along with technical assistance and training, and ensure SCDOT remains in compliance with federal and state program guidelines.

The Code of Federal Regulations, 49 CFR 26.55 governs DBE participation tracking requirements on projects. Proficient mechanisms are essential for tracking DBE project activities on the project. The DBE Quarterly Report (QTR) and Trucker’s Report forms are the primary documents utilized to track payments to DBEs for work performed on all projects. The Trucker’s Report payment totals for DBE participation must be the same as on the DBE Quarterly Report. Other forms such as the Subcontractor Hauler Approval Request and the DBE Tracking Spreadsheet are vital to reconciling award verification and DBE payments.

The Quarterly Report packet is due to the DBERDM unit each quarter by the 20th of January, April, July, and October for every active project. It is imperative that the payments are accurate on all documents. Your assistance in reviewing information thoroughly to ensure payment totals are accurate and all signatures are completed accordingly, prior to submission, is much appreciated. This review eliminates time and excessive work of contractors submitting revised quarter report documents.

The regulations require appropriate signatures and dates on each document regarding DBE payments for work performed by certified firms in SCDOT’s Unified Certification Program directory and as approved by SCDOT to work on the project.

DOCUMENT	REQUIRED SIGNATURES
DBE Quarterly Report for each payment per quarter	DBE, Prime, and the Resident Construction Engineers/ Government Project Manager/ Engineer
DBE Quarterly Report with NO payment per quarter	Prime and the Resident Construction Engineers/ Government Project Manager/Engineer
Trucker’s Report	DBE, Prime and the Resident Construction Engineers/ Government Project Manager/Engineer

To comply with regulations and ensure DBE project tracking is accurate, statewide training was conducted for external and internal customers earlier this year at the district offices. Ongoing training is always available and include webinars, workshops statewide and onsite visits as necessary.

Additional information regarding DBE reporting and forms are located on SCDOT’s website at <https://www.scdot.org/business/bus-development-reporting.aspx>.

DBEs in Training



Juanita Campbell, training coordinator for MSBA Business Development Center welcomed registered DBEs to Effective Business Development and Business Management facilitated by Karen Jenkins of KRJ Consulting, LLC.



Small groups brainstorming managerial practices. Foreground, L-R: John Hawkins, TAM Consulting Services, LLC, Julia Jennings-Belk and Latonja Walker, Kurtis Logistic Systems, LLC. Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth.



Karen Jenkins listening during DBE participants' small group work. L-R: Karen Jenkins, KRJ Consulting, James Heyward, Heyward Enterprise, Lavonna Garrett, Gray Court Contracting, Inc., Anthony Fullington, Fullington Construction, LLC.

2023 AASHTO Agency Administrators Conference - Civil Rights Program

By Mary Wyeth, Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs



Approximately 252 individuals representing 32 departments of transportation, various federal agencies and consultants attended this year's conference in Long Beach, California. The SCDOT's Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs (MSBA) sent four representatives as practitioners of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. This was an opportunity for all to meet and discuss program implementation. Each year attendees are interested in how SCDOT MSBA applies the various aspects of our units—Office of Civil Rights, DBE Certification, DBE supportive services, and compliance efforts.

Director of DBE Mega Projects and Technical Assistance and Compliance, Gary Linn notes this year eight states requested copies of our DBE supplemental specifications and project specific DBE goal setting calculation worksheets and asked how we provide technical assistance to certified DBEs. Also, many are interested in how SCDOT implements and monitors our DBE program on Alternative Delivery contracts (Design-Build Projects), a significant issue through-out the United States.

Gary moderated and participated in a discussion on “DBE Alternative Delivery.” This contracting method is being used more and more through the US and allows a contractor to design a project then build it versus SCDOT designing the project. The issue is traditionally project specific DBE goals are based on known items, quantities and estimated costs. This allows a goal to be established and contractors to submit accurate “DBE commitments” at bid time. In design-build, there are no knowns, only general ideas of what would be needed to build a project.

DBE Certification Analyst, Kimberly Harris attended various sessions, for example, National Programmatic Workgroups, DBE Certification Model, and DBE Prompt Payment: Current Issues and Successful Practices. She left feeling informed and engaged having been able to network, exchange information and reflect on our processes. Kim, too, presented at the conference as part of the DBE Program Implementation - Successful Practices Panel. She shared MSBA's commendable practices and gave a brief overview on a range of topics from policies and procedures, outreach and education, and database management to name a few.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Coordinator, Brandon Hair, describes the opportunity as a spectacular experience to network and learn in sessions focused on OJT and equity in the workplace; he gained information from more seasoned OJT coordinators.

Overall, attending AASHTO allows us, as a division, to optimize our performance and to become more versatile and knowledgeable in our roles.

As the former Chair of the AASHTO Committee on Civil Rights, Davis was appointed to Equity Task Force group that met the day prior to the conference. During the day-long session, Davis was asked to serve on a panel which addressed how state DOTs can streamline contract administration to centralize certification, improve payment time and standardize transparent data collection, as well as how to identify partners related to these efforts. Program issues and challenges were also discussed.

During the overall conference, Davis served on two additional panels. One panel, Civil Rights Programs – Measuring Impacts and Success, focused on approaches SCDOT takes to measure the impact and success of the division's programs. Approaches include reviewing data to determine the types of projects being awarded to DBEs firms, and consulting with prime contractors to discover what additional trades are most needed to be filled by DBEs. Davis also served on a panel entitled: DOT Civil Rights Office Workforce Needs. Davis gave an overview of how SCDOT decided to reduce each division's workforce by 15%, disseminate those duties and increase salaries of the remaining staff. This action resulted in a smaller but higher paid workforce.



L-R: Kimberly Harris, DBE Certification; Brandon Hair, Office of Civil Rights, Yolanda Morris, FHWA-SC Division, Gary Linn, DBE Mega Projects and Technical Assistance and Compliance; and Greg Davis, Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs.

Photo courtesy of Greg Davis.

SCDOT NEVI Debrief with Electrical Contractors

By Mary Wyeth

Rob Bedenbaugh, PE, CPM is director of the Office of Engineering Support. He's also the SCDOT's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program point of contact. According to USDOT's FHWA website, NEVI is part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and was established to provide funding to strategically deploy electric vehicles (EV) and to establish an interconnected network. Earlier this year, Bedenbaugh organized a roundtable for electrical contractors. He was joined by Greg Davis, SCDOT Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs (MSBA), and Bruce Cole, Richard T. Greener Institute for Social Policy Research. Davis reviewed resources available from MSBA then Bedenbaugh gave an overview of NEVI and how Justice40 applies to NEVI. Open discussion ensued before the roundtable adjourned.



Rob Bedenbaugh fields questions during the roundtable.



Bedenbaugh elaborates on the various charger levels which comprise NEVI. Photos courtesy of Gary Linn.

Jobsite Safety for our Families

By Gary Linn



SCDOT requires all individuals who visit or work on any construction site to wear appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE). This includes steel toed shoes, hard hat, gloves, protective eyewear, reflective vest, etc. as applicable. Recently, MSBA's Technical Assistance Team has found a number of contractor employees without proper PPE. Most notably not wearing hard hats as required by OSHA or wearing vests/shirts

without reflectivity as required by SCDOT Special Provisions. These items are required on all SCDOT construction sites and anyone can be removed from the site for failing to be safe. Safety violations can impact a Prime contractor's quality score needed to bid on some contracts, affect the cost of insurance and impact the Resident Construction Engineer's quality project rating as well. For years I have conducted safety briefings and ask everyone to consider the bigger picture – our families. Should you have the misfortune of being involved in a work-related accident and found not wearing the proper PPE, worker's compensation insurance may determine you are not eligible for compensation for medical bills or pay. Even if the PPE could not have prevented the accident, claim adjusters can infer if you were not adhering to safety rules such as not wearing a proper reflective vest, you probably were not following other safety requirements.

DBEs at Work



*Kenneth Trejo and Kelvin Duarte, Cruz Landscaping at Leesburg Road.
Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson.*



*Emilio Valentin CRG, Inc. with SCDOT's James Cooper.
Photo courtesy of James Cooper*

Prompt Payment of Retainage

By Gary Linn

Federal and SC State law govern prompt payment of subcontractors and the withholding and return of retainage on SCDOT construction projects. SCDOT, through SCDOT's Prompt Payment Clause, is included in all contracts and applies to all contractors as a prime or subcontractor.

A contractor may withhold no more than 5% of payments to subcontractors during the life of the subcontract agreement. Once the subcontractor's scope of work has been satisfactorily completed, accepted by SCDOT, and that work has been paid for by SCDOT to the prime contractor, the retainage must be returned to the subcontractor within seven (7) calendar days.

The United States Department of Transportation has addressed retainage noting:

- Prime contractors cannot wait until the recipient (SCDOT) has made final payment to the prime to release subcontractor retainage.
- Regulation is intended to modify common industry practice of withholding all subcontractors' retainage until completion of the prime contractor's contract.

- Satisfactory completion is defined by the regulations as "when all the tasks called for in the subcontract have been accomplished and documented as required by the recipient."
- The obligation to promptly pay subcontractors or to release retainage does not arise if there is a legitimate dispute over the subcontractor's performance and approved by SCDOT.
- A prime contractor may not withhold payment to a subcontractor that has satisfactorily completed work on one contract as a means to address a dispute on an unrelated contract.
- The contractual commitment (Prompt Payment) is a material term of the contract between the recipient (SCDOT) and the prime contractor. Failure by a contractor to honor this commitment is considered a material breach of the contract.

For further information consult these references:

- [SC Prompt Pay Act](#)
- [SCDOT Prompt Payment Clause \(2017\)](#)
- [USDOT Q & A](#)

WTS Rosa Parks Award

By Mary Wyeth

SCDOT's Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall and FHWA's Division Administrator Emily Lawton are co-recipients of the WTS Rosa Parks Leadership Award for the I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Project. The award recognizes an organization, project or individual who contributes to promoting diversity, inclusion and multi-cultural awareness and exhibits extraordinary efforts or initiatives in facilitating professional opportunities for women and minorities.

Greg Davis accepted the award on behalf of Secretary Hall and delivered a few words by way of her letter in which she noted, "The mitigation efforts on this project do more than address the impacts of a singular road project. They work to acknowledge and address previous deficiencies and to set a new standard for how environmental justice efforts should happen in this state and across the nation."

Secretary Hall emphasized "when I receive an award, I do so on behalf of the countless employees that work diligently at SCDOT ... without the incredible people at SCDOT, nothing that we do would be possible." She also acknowledged the "distinguished privilege to be honored alongside Division Administrator Emily Lawton" because her work exemplifies the possibility of meaningful partnerships.



L-R: Greg Davis, Emily Lawton, and Shundreka Givan who is the deputy division administrator, FHWA SC Division.
Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson.

DBE Outreach Events

The following is extracted from DESA, Inc.'s Meeting Summary and Final Report dated September 12, 2023:



Carolina Crossroads Phase 3 DBE Outreach was a two-day event that featured a virtual General Session on Tuesday, August 29 and one-on-one meetings on Wednesday, August 30. It was hosted by SCDOT and HDR. As a subcontractor to HDR, DESA (a DBE firm), provided planning, facilitation, and logistical support for the event.

The purpose of the outreach was to bring together the two short-listed prime contractors and DBE firms interested in obtaining subcontracts for the project.

Day 1 presenters included James Cooper, Chief Technical Advisor & Compliance Manager; David Rogers, SCDOT Construction Manager, and Greg Davis, Minority & Small Business Affairs Division Director. Additional presenters included representative from the two short-listed subcontractors: Archer-United-Blythe Joint Venture and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co. Kaela Bailey, HDR Strategic Communications Manager, served as event moderator.

Day 2 One-on-One meetings took place at DoubleTree Hotel located at 2100 Bush River Road in Columbia. Representatives from Archer-United-Blythe Joint Venture and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co. began in-person and virtual one-on-one meetings with SCDOT certified DBEs at 9am. Each meeting lasted 10 minutes. Company representatives provided information about available opportunities and DBEs asked specific questions related to their industry. Each DBE had the opportunity to meet with each short-listed contractor.

For information about the mega-project, updates, and news visit <https://www.scdotcarolinacrossroads.com/>



Carlos Zuniga, concrete finisher for
CRG, Inc.

DAN-KEL Concrete Coring &
Cutting, saw-cutting pavement
along I-126 Median near
Colonial Life Blvd.



Mike Burchell, TJC Painting Contractors, Inc.
painting new bridge structure SC-267.

Photos courtesy of Rob Thompson.

DBE Outreach Events (continued)



L-R: Edgar Martinez, Cruz Landscaping & Concrete, LLC; Marty King, MECK Mechanical, LLC; Anthony Fullington, Fullington Construction, LLC.



L-R: Marty King, MECK Mechanical, LLC; Anthony Fullington, Fullington Construction, LLC; Grace Hidalgo, Apex Construction Group.



L-R: MSBA's Juanita Campbell, Mary Wyeth, Natasha Livingston, and Greg Davis.

DBEs introduced themselves at MSBA's Bridge Package 20 Outreach event held at the Gateway Conference Center, Richburg, SC on Oct. 3, 2023. The event included project overview by SCDOT's Michael Pitts, PE and presentations from each of the three short-listed primes. DBEs then had the opportunity to meet with each of the primes individually.

Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth.



DBE Outreach Events (continued)



Bradley Reynolds, project manager, SCDOT Alternative Delivery reviewed the project requirements and scope of work to DBE subcontractors, prime contractors, and staff from the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs. For more information visit: [I-26/I-95 Interchange Improvements \(scdot.org\)](https://www.scdot.org/I-26/I-95-Interchange-Improvements)

Gary Linn with Jamaliah Hemingway, owner, ASJ Carter LLC.



Gloria Tanner, president, Comprehensive Business Consultants, LLC (second from left) is a certified DBE; she organized and marketed the DBE outreach event held at the Santee Convention Center in September.

Photos courtesy of Natasha Livingston.

Retirements



Deputy Secretary of Engineering Leland Colvin (center) announced his retirement from SCDOT effective July 1, 2023 after 28 years of service to the agency. The Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs thanked him for recent impactful leadership since the 2020 Bridging the Gap event. Colvin issued, and made good on, his open invitation to DBEs to reach out and continue conversations about their experiences getting work with the SCDOT. Subsequently, he facilitated roundtables to address concerns related to pandemic cost increases for materials such as steel, concrete, and longline striping paint.

L-R: SCDOT's senior leadership: Justin Powell, Barbara Wessinger, Karl McCottry, Maggie Hendry, Leland Colvin, Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall, Andy Leaphart, Mark LaBruyere, Greg Davis.

Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson.



Graphic Designer and Artistic Director Bonnie Cramer retired in May after 28 years of service to SCDOT. MSBA's Greg Davis, presented Cramer with a memento thanking her for service to minority and small businesses by designing marketing materials for new DBEs and two bi-annual publications: the Business Development Center Training Calendar and the Business Curve Newsletter.

Photo courtesy of Mary Wyeth.

Staff Recognition

Alyssia Glenn



Alyssia Glenn became the Program Coordinator I in the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs' DBE Reporting and Data Management unit in August 2023. In this role, she processes state and federal project documents for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and Small Business Enterprises (SBE). However, Alyssia is no stranger to the agency. She started her SCDOT journey as a contractor through the State of South Carolina working in Contract Assurance, December 2022. She's also worked in various other departments as a temporary employee such as Local Government Services and briefly with DBE Reporting and Data Management. Now, she's enjoying being a fulltime employee with the division.

Alyssia is also a children's book author and owner of a nonprofit organization, Foster and Adoption Mission: The Caring Closet, which provides basic necessities to children who enter the foster care system, as well as to families in the community. She loves to spend her spare time with family, friends and being a servant through community service. Alyssia also served as Miss North Carolina Plus World 2021 and received the title of Miss Congeniality during her tenure. Her life's motto is to "Treat people the way you want to be treated, it's the Golden Rule."

Chariti Spann



Chariti Spann is the Lead Equal Opportunity/On-the-Job (OJT) Coordinator for the Office of Civil Rights, and began her career at South Carolina Department of Transportation in March 2023. In this role, Chariti is responsible for ensuring Equal Opportunity on federal-aid construction projects. This is achieved by conducting Contract Compliance Reviews and Stage-Type Inspections, and then preparing and submitting reports to management and Federal Highway Administration. From an OJT standpoint, she is responsible for monitoring compliance of Local Public Agency projects with Training Special Provision Requirements by reviewing and processing documents to include on-site reviews, employee interviews, monthly training status reports (final report only), enrollment forms and initial training schedules, annual updates, etc.

Prior to her transition to SCDOT, Chariti served as a program coordinator at South Carolina Department of Corrections, Division of Classification and Inmate Records, for the first nine (9) years of her state government career. She reviewed the criminal history of offenders and then determined their placement at one of the 21 correctional facilities across the state of South Carolina.

Ms. Spann is a team player and enjoys helping and learning as much information as possible about the division. She lives by the motto, "You begin interviewing today, for the job you want in the future."

Ms. Spann holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Morris College (2013) and a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from Northcentral University (2022). When she is not working, Ms. Spann enjoys spending time with family and close friends. She is looking forward to welcoming her first child in February 2024.

Staff photos courtesy of Cody Crouch.

TRAINING

DBE/SBE UPCOMING TRAINING COURSES

DATE

COURSE

October 10, 2023	<i>Construction Quality Construction (CQM)</i>
October 12-13, 2023	<i>Temporary Traffic Control</i>
October 18, 2023	<i>Building Your Business Plan</i>
October 19-20, 2023	<i>Estimating & Bidding in the Transportation Arena</i>
November 6, 2023	<i>Flagger Novice Flagger Instructor</i>
November 14-15, 2023	<i>SCDOT Concrete Field Technician</i>
December 13, 2023	<i>Basic Work Zone</i>
December 14, 2023	<i>QuickBooks- Online Version</i>

2024 DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED:

<i>DBE Orientation</i>	<i>Utility Coordination</i>
<i>Strategic Human Resources</i>	<i>Certified Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control Inspector (CEPSCI) Program</i>
<i>Basic Work Zone</i>	<i>Drone Academy</i>
<i>Flagger (Novice & Instructor)</i>	<i>QuickBooks Job Costing</i>
<i>Temporary Traffic Control</i>	
<i>OSHA 10 Hour</i>	

Interested in registering for an upcoming training? Download and complete the Training Registration Form at: [Training Calendar and Registration Form](#) then email it to DBEBusinessDevelopmentCenter@scdot.org.



U.S Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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