



the  
**BUSINESS CURVE**  
ADVANCING MINORITY & SMALL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Summer 2018



**INSIDE:**  
**One on One with Myra Slack  
of Evergreen Landscaping, LLC**

**2017-2018  
Transportation Careers  
Training Program (TCTP)**

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Hello Readers,

Spring has sprung, summer is upon us and excitement is in the air surrounding changes at SCDOT.

If you travel within South Carolina, you cannot help but notice road resurfacing, interstate widening and highway safety projects underway. SCDOT will continue to make gradual, but real and significant strides toward bringing the highway system back from three decades of neglect. This should yield numerous contracting opportunities for local, small, minority and women-owned businesses. For additional information about these and upcoming projects, I invite you to visit: <http://www.scdot.org/projects/ten-year-plan.aspx>.



In addition to the traditional construction/pre-construction opportunities, Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall recently announced a management initiative focusing on the procurement of professional services. Firms classified in this service area are utilized by SCDOT in an effort to assist in the delivery of the annual road and bridge program. Professional Services consultants are chosen by utilizing a “qualification-based” selection process in accordance with federal requirements. If you are a professional services provider, I encourage you to visit: <http://www.scdot.org/doing/contractorConsultant.aspx> and see if doing business with SCDOT is right for you.

Another change (within our Division) centers in the area of staffing. Anthony Cromartie is now the Manager of DBE/SBE Certification and Special Projects, and Gary Linn now serves as Manager of DBE Technical Assistance and Compliance. Both of these gentlemen have worked with small businesses for over five years and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to these positions.

Lastly, the Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs will be losing two of its most active and supportive DBE/SBE Managers due to retirement. Paula Hollis, who leads the Business Development Center and has orchestrated numerous DBE outreach events through the years, will be retiring with over 34 years of service with SCDOT. Colette Murray Swan, who serves as DBE Development and Training Manager, will be retiring with over 33 years of service in State Government. These two managers will be sorely missed by the Agency, their colleagues and the businesses they have faithfully assisted over the years. Although they will be retiring in June 2018, the effects of their efforts will continue to benefit the businesses they have cared so much about.

Thank you again for taking time to review the material in this edition of the Business Curve. Please let us know if there is other information you would be interested in reading about.

Greg Davis

*Director Minority & Small Business Affairs*

# One on One with Myra Slack of Evergreen Landscaping, LLC

**1. How long have you been in business?**

“Evergreen Landscaping, LLC (Evergreen) officially opened on September 1, 2005 installing silt fence primarily on private projects in South Carolina and North Carolina. When starting the business my goal was to expand to all aspects of erosion control and later become a grading contractor. Evergreen has accomplished these goals and looks forward to expanding on them.”

**2. How long have you been a DBE?**

“Evergreen entered the DBE program on October 31, 2005.”

**3. Why did you choose the DBE program?**

“My experience in the construction business prior to owning my own company exposed me to the DBE program and the many benefits of that program. I saw what a tremendous support system the DBE program offered to the certified firms along with many training opportunities throughout the year that were offered. The DBE program also offers the opportunity (thru goals on federally funded projects) to work with contractors to establish long lasting working relationships.”

**4. What is your greatest accomplishment being a part of the SCDOT DBE program?**

“It is very hard to specifically say what my one greatest accomplishment has been because there have been so many, but I would probably say the confidence and knowledge I have gained by being given the opportunity to be a part of the DBE program and working on so many different SCDOT projects. From a company perspective that accomplishment would translate to the growth my company has encountered since becoming a DBE.”

**5. How has the SCDOT helped your business grow?**

“SCDOT has approved Evergreen to perform work as a DBE, Subcontractor and as a Prime Contractor on projects and has



approved all expansions that I have requested over the years. This has given me the opportunity to work on much larger projects and expand my relationships with more contractors.”

**6. What are some of your most complex contracts since being certified?**

”The project that stands out most in my mind was the emergency bridge repair on US 76 in Newberry County that we worked on with UIG, Inc. This heavily traveled bridge was washed out due to flooding and we were given the opportunity to work as the grading subcontractor to UIG and by working as a team we had the bridge opened to traffic in record time. From an erosion control/grassing perspective one of the most challenging projects was working with McCarthy on the US 310/601 interchange in Orangeburg County where we installed silt fences in areas that were waist deep in water after experiencing two major hurricanes.”



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

“I would strongly encourage them to become a part of the DBE program with SCDOT and utilize the training opportunities that are available to them through this program. I would also encourage them to use the resources available and the tremendous support system the DBE office provides certified DBE companies.”

**8. What is your long-term goal for Evergreen Landscaping LLC?**

“To become a stronger more competitive grading contractor and to utilize the personnel I have in place to expand into other areas of SCDOT work. We have been blessed to have been a part of numerous Design Build Bridge projects and have successfully completed some of our largest grading operations on these projects. Also, continue to perform the erosion control and grassing aspects of the company and continue growth in those areas as well.”

land that consisted of over 600 feet of storm drain, drainage structures, asphalt and traffic control. When Evergreen was awarded this project, I knew it would be very challenging, but also knew we had the experience in the field to get the work done. I also knew the procedures and paperwork involved as a Prime Contractor would be different from that as a Subcontractor, but with the help of Resident Construction Engineer, Mr. Greg Williams, his staff and the support of the DBE office, all paperwork submitted was approved and work began on this project. Mr. Williams and his staff were extremely helpful and supportive during the construction of this project. Evergreen certainly looks forward to working with Mr. Williams and his staff on future projects. Although Evergreen encountered a two week delay for utility relocation we were still able to successfully complete the project to meet the original completion date.”

**11. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

“In closing, I would like to give a lot of credit for the success of Evergreen to my employees. Although I own Evergreen and



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

“HARD WORK! I attribute my success to yes, hard work, but my experience, determination and dedication to the company and my employees has helped Evergreen become a successful and competitive company. Also, the opportunities and encouragement that have been given to me through the DBE program allows me to expand my knowledge and also my business.”

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

“Our first contract as a Prime Contractor with SCDOT was a drainage project in Chesterfield County in downtown Page-

run the day to day operation the employees are the backbone that makes this company successful. I have a tremendous support system in the office with an Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper along with an estimator that has numerous years of experience in the construction industry. I am blessed to have my brother, Kenny Sizemore working with me as Project Manager overseeing the grading operation and numerous operators that have years of experience in grading, storm drain and numerous other aspects of the construction industry. I would also like to personally thank Mr. James Cooper for his dedication and support to Evergreen and all the DBE companies in South Carolina.”



## 2017-2018 Transportation Careers Training Program (TCTP)



The Transportation Careers Training Program (TCTP) is designed to prepare unemployed, underemployed, minorities, females, and other economically disadvantaged individuals for meaningful employment opportunities in the transportation industry. This program includes Pre-Employment Training, Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Training, and Heavy Equipment Operator Training.

The object of TCTP is to assist in lowering the state's unemployment rate by increasing the number of participants that may become gainfully employed after successful completion of this program. It will also assist contractors by creating a pool of applicants from which they may recruit individuals to participate in the On-the-Job Training Program in fulfillment of the Training Special Provision Requirements.

Thirty residents from five South Carolina counties (Allendale, Bamberg, Marlboro, Marion and Orangeburg) were eligible to participate in this year's program. Twenty two participants enrolled and eleven were offered employment opportunities with the South

Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and highway construction contractors.

TCTP continues to serve as a mechanism for preparing individuals for career opportunities in the transportation industry. The 2018-2019 TCTP will be implemented in Williamsburg County.



## SCDOT Business Development Center Host Human Resources Class for DBEs

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) company owners paused for a photo-op after completing the Strategic Human Resources Recruiting, Hiring, Performance and Retention Class. The training was held on March 2, 2018 at the SCDOT Headquarters Building. It was taught by Alysia Kehoe, of Kehoe Consultants, LLC. Ms. Kehoe, also a DBE, is a Certified Coaching Strategist. She has over 20 years' experience in human resource management, specializing in strategic planning / visioning / process analysis, performance management and leadership skills development for individuals, teams and organizations.

Participants were given valuable HR information, along with specific tools and techniques to operate their company's HR Department. Particular emphasis was placed on recruiting good employees, retaining employees, and time tracking in the construction industry.



### REMOVED, SUSPENDED, DECERTIFIED, Oh no!

Did you know that if you fail to update your certification annually or do not provide a complete copy of your current Federal business tax return by August each year (if you filed a tax extension) your DBE certification can be suspended pending decertification?

SCDOT notifies every certified DBE firm 45 days in advance as to when their annual update is due and provides a reminder notice after the due date prior to certification being suspended. After a 30 day suspension period, a firm is decertified and must wait 12 months before reapplying for DBE certification.

***If you are having any issue which may delay this requirement, please contact our office for guidance at 803-737-1372 and prevent decertification!***

# Minority Affairs Host DBE Haulers Forum

The SCDOT Division of Minority & Small Business Affairs, along with its partners FHWA, FMCSA and SC DPS Highway Patrol, hosted a Forum for Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Hauling firms during last winter at the Brookland Banquet and Conference Center, West Columbia, South Carolina.

The DBE Haulers Forum is a two-day workshop convened every two years to bring together the largest single group of minority business firms certified by the SCDOT. The Haulers Forum ensures that participants are aware of the most recent federal/state compliance laws and regulations. The Forum provides training to build the knowledge, skills and financial awareness of hauling firms. In addition, it provides networking opportunities to meet prime contractors and service providers. Several contractors served

as panel guests including, Ron Banks of Banks Construction, Jeff Andrews of Preferred Materials, Inc., Diane Rushing of AOS Specialty Contractors, Inc., owners Latall & Matthew Zimmerman of VBW Hauling Company, and owner Kevin Manning of Manning & Sons Trucking & Utilities

Topics covered during the DBE Haulers Forum included the recently passed highway gas tax revenue bill, the Davis Bacon Act, Joint Ventures/Expansion Through Collaborations and a business finance panel entitled, “Deal or No Deal”. Participants were given a special on-site Simulated Level-1 Commercial Vehicle Inspection by Cpl. Todd Catoe of the SC Highway Patrol/State Transport Police Division. This DBE Haulers Forum saw a record number of participants.



SCDOT Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall welcomed attendees to the DBE Haulers Forum. She was joined on stage by Mark Halter, FMCSA Division Program Specialist (SC); Captain Dean Dill, SCDPS Highway Patrol; Emily Lawton, FHWA Division Administrator (SC); and Terecia Wilson, DBE Haulers Forum Moderator. (Photo by Nathaniel Abraham, III)



Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall addresses questions from participants at the DBE Haulers Forum. (Photo by Nathaniel Abraham, III)



MSBA Director Greg Davis and Colette Murray Swann (Haulers Forum Coordinator)



SCDOT Chief Engineer for Project Delivery Randy Young gives gas tax revenue presentation at the DBE Haulers Forum. (Photo by Nathaniel Abraham, III)

Brothers Latall and Matthew Zimmerman (Owners of VBW Hauling) were the luncheon speakers and the DBE Haulers Forum.

Small Business Financial Panel at the DBE Haulers Forum (left to right): Kenneth Robinson of Woodforest National Bank; Archie Johnson of SC Community Works; Chester Leak of TD National Bank; Brandon Buttner of SC Community Loan Fund; and Moderator Terecia Wilson (Photos by Nathaniel Abraham, III)



Participants at the DBE Haulers Forum (Photo by Nathaniel Abraham, III)



Cpl. Todd Catoe gives Simulated Level-1 Dump Truck Inspection at DBE Haulers Forum (Photos by Nathaniel Abraham, III)



Top Left: James Cooper, Anthony Cromartie, Keven Manning (Manning & Sons Hauling Company) and Alexander Burton

Bottom Left: Christina Johnson, Lis Bleasdale, Juanita Campbell, Paula Hollis and Natalie Diaz

Bottom Right: Syrees Oliver, Carolyn Burton, Delicia Wingard, Cory Pope



# BENEFITS OF BEING DBE CERTIFIED WITH SCDOT

One of the main benefits of being certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firm with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is being able to take advantage of the various training classes.

1. Classes are held at different times throughout the year and are coordinated by the Business Development Center (BDC).
2. A DBE Training Calendar is published yearly with a list of the classes, dates, time and locations.
3. Classes offered are usually based on the needs of the small business owners.
4. Suggestions are given on evaluation forms, which are completed at the end of each class. The forms specifically ask participants to give recommendations of other training they may want the BDC to offer that could help improve their businesses.

DBEs are encouraged to take full advantage of the various opportunities that provide invaluable experience and information with access to the trainers who are experts in their field. These classes not only enhance the DBEs business knowledge and encourage best practices, but also provide hands-on experience. Small

business owners can then impart this knowledge to their employees and incorporate into their day-to-day operations what was learned. Doing so will make their firms competitive, efficient and productive, while assisting them in adjusting to the changing landscape of the business environment.

There is also the opportunity to have access to these experts to “pick their brains” with question and answer sessions about best business practices.

Networking and meeting other DBE firms is another added benefit when attending these classes:

- Networking is vital to small businesses.
- Can offer support amongst like-minded business peers, raise a business’ profile and provide an opportunity to open new doors.
- Can enhance employee’s skills.

All things considered, the Business Development Center (BDC) is here to ensure that our DBEs are trained and ready for the varying opportunities that will come their way, as well building on the best practices they have already established for their businesses.

DBEs, the ball is in your court.... Sign up! Show up!

## CUSTOMER SERVICE... IT BREEDS REPEAT CUSTOMERS!

A firm spends a good portion of their profits buying equipment, materials, paying employees, training, advertising, and networking to be successful. However, too often poor customer service can be the single cause of a business failing. SCDOT spends valuable time and effort to ensure every one of the nearly 4,300 staff members understands this philosophy. Employees are trained on everything from prompt responses, telephone etiquette, to problem solving. Invest in customer service training to ensure your customers are satisfied with your business from personal interactions to project completion!



## MSBA helps out with SCDOT Spring Spruce Up Day



Members of the Minority and Small Business Affairs team joined forces with the Fairfield County Maintenance team in the SCDOT Spring Spruce Up on March 22, 2018. This group’s effort, along with other SCDOT teams across the state, was responsible for collecting over 20,000 bags of debris off of the state’s roads and highways.

This statewide effort to attack the litter problem in South Carolina was considered a tremendous success and provided momentum for the next litter collection in the fall.

Minority and Small Business Affairs teammates were Carington Murray, Cory Pope, Greg Davis, Anthony Cromartie and Chris Corley.



## Knowledge is Power



Did you know SCDOT regularly strives to improve services provided to customers? While the saying “Knowledge is Power” is commonly known to many, SCDOT tries to make this a reality. This year, the DBE Reporting and Data Management Unit conducted training sessions in all seven districts and to Prime contractors during the 2018 SCDOT Highway Engineers Conference. Necessary information for tracking DBE participation on projects was provided in order to remain in compliance with state and federal regulations. The training included components from The Code of Federal

Regulations, 49 CFR 26 and proficient tools to monitor project activities. The implementation of these tools allows documents to be submitted in a timely manner. The Minority and Small Business Division strives to enhance equal opportunities through Small Business Development, Contracting, Monitoring and Workforce Development. Training and technical assistance is available individually, onsite, and/or via telephone. Additional information regarding DBE reporting and forms are located on SCDOT’s website at <http://www.scdot.org/business/bus-development-overview.aspx>

### NEW WEBSITE LINK!!

SCDOT recently revamped its website. With this, previous links we have advertised in brochures, emails, and letters no longer work. To access our web page for information and vital forms, please use: [www.scdot.org](http://www.scdot.org) then click on the tab **Business/look for Doing Business/then Minority & Small Business Programs**.

Or click on the following: <http://www.scdot.org/business/bus-development-overview.aspx>

## Out and about with the Affirmative Action Office



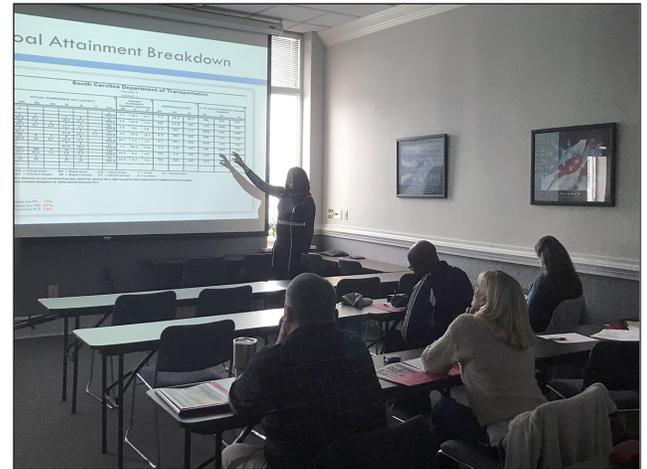
Members of the Affirmative Action team met with SCDOT District 1 DEA, Robert Dickinson



Affirmative Action Office staff met with graduates of the Fatherhood Coalition located in Sumter, South Carolina and spoke with future candidates about upcoming job opportunities with SCDOT.



The Affirmative Action Unit attended the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Summit at Claflin University located in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Syrees Oliver, Affirmative Action Officer who was one of the panelists, shared information with students on how to enter the workforce as well as job opportunities/Internships with SCDOT.



Affirmative Action Training held at SCDOT District 1 Residence Maintenance facility located in Columbia SC



The Affirmative Action Unit attended a CDL Advisory Meeting at Eau Claire High School located in Columbia, South Carolina



The Affirmative Action Office conducted training held at SCDOT District 4 Residence Maintenance facility located in Chester, South Carolina.