

Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 10: ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2022



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).

Investing in California Small Business

**SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER
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FEBRUARY 2022**

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

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We're kicking off 2022 with a celebration. More than half of the staff at the California High-Speed Rail Authority are women and that's the reason why we caught the eye of the **Sacramento Chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS)**. The organization selected the Authority as the Employer of the Year. We were honored for providing leadership in mentoring women in the transportation field, providing opportunities for upward mobility and employing women at the highest levels of leadership.

We're still talking about what a year 2021 turned out to be. It started out with some trepidation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it turned out to be a time of accomplishment for the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

We marked many milestones last year. We adopted the 2020 Business Plan, which was delayed by the coronavirus crisis and we're about to issue the Draft 2022 Business Plan. It will reaffirm our roadmap for completing the 171-mile alignment from Merced to Bakersfield in the Central Valley and finishing environmental work on other project sections from Bakersfield to Los Angeles/Anaheim and Merced to San Francisco.

We're cheering the fact that the Federal Railroad Administration said the Authority has fully met its state fund match requirements for federal dollars one year ahead of schedule. The Authority spent \$2.5 billion in federal funds by the September 2017 deadline. California was required to match those funds by December 2022. Most of that money went toward building 119 miles of high-speed rail in the Central Valley.

Our demand for workers continues to grow. On Labor Day, we celebrated 6,000 jobs created since construction began on

"We expect more accomplishments to come our way in 2022. We couldn't do any of it without all the dedicated workers, supporters and small businesses who have spent long hours getting us to where we are."

Ashley Mistler
Small Business Advocate
California High-Speed Rail Authority

high-speed rail in 2015. By December, we were up to 7,300 jobs created. The majority of those jobs are going to people who live in the Central Valley.

To stay safe during the pandemic, we continue to conduct outreach events and meetings online.

More than 30 people logged on to the Business Advisory Council (BAC) meeting in November. Process and Program Development Branch Chief Catrina Blair joined me to talk about proposed changes to the Authority's Small Business (SB) Program. Our goal is to align the SB program with current state and federal guidelines and eliminate confusion about the overall 30% Small Business (SB) participation goal, which includes participation goals of 10% for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and 3% for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE).



Tara Lynn Gray, the Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, spoke to the Authority's Business Advisory Council last November. She said the state needs more small businesses to bid on state contracts. She also asked for ideas on what should be done to help the smallest firms that face challenges after winning state contracts.

BAC attendees also heard from Tara Lynn Gray, the Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, part of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, better known as GO-Biz. She said the state needs more small businesses to bid on state contracts. She asked for ideas on how to improve their access to bonding and financing. She noted many companies, especially the smallest ones, need technical assistance after they successfully bid and win state contracts.

Authority CEO Brian Kelly was up in the wee hours of the morning to accommodate a time zone difference when he spoke at Spain's annual RailLive! Madrid international rail conference. He gave an overview of the high-speed rail project which included a look



at funding and progress on construction in the Central Valley. Kelly was in good company at the conference which was attended by senior executives from the rail industry from around the world.

Outreach and Student Engagement Coordinator Yaqeline Castro was super busy last year. She organized, hosted and wrangled other staff to join her at 40 events focusing on students and young professionals. In this issue, you can read about a networking event for engineering students at Fresno City College.

2021 was also a year of honors for the high-speed rail program.

The **San Joaquin River Viaduct was selected as the Structure Project of the Year** by the California Transportation Foundation.

In December, the Fresno Chamber of Commerce tapped Authority Board of Directors Chairman Tom Richards as the winner of the Leon S. Peters Award. Richards, who has been

on our board since 2010, is CEO of the Penstar Group, a Fresno development company that has played a major role in housing, office, retail and industrial developments and a facility called Terry's House that houses families of patients at a nearby hospital.

A lot of familiar faces asked to see what we're doing in the Central Valley. Last year, Governor Gavin Newsom, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Representative Jim Costa (D-Calif.) toured our construction sites. And in December, **Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose** came calling. He met construction workers and bravely walked to the top of the towering arches of the Cedar Viaduct, just south of Fresno.

Since the beginning of last year, we added 59 small businesses, and by the end of November, there are 653 working on high-speed rail.

In this issue, you'll meet the owners of **Bess Utility Solutions**, a company that helps us locate, map and move underground utilities. We'll also introduce you to **Iron Industries**, a firm that's fabricating metal barriers for irrigation ditches that crisscross the area in Construction Package 2-3.

We expect more accomplishments to come our way in 2022. We couldn't do any of it without all the dedicated workers, supporters and small businesses who have spent long hours getting us to where we are. We invite others to hop aboard high-speed rail as we press our way forward toward making it a reality.

Ashley Mistler



1. Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose (yellow vest) toured high-speed rail construction sites in December. He could see for miles when he climbed to the top of the arches of the Cedar Viaduct, just south of Fresno.
2. Engineering students came out for an opportunity to meet high-speed rail engineers at a networking event at Fresno City College. Senior Transportation Engineer Robert Campbell (right) told students they should find a firm that suits them. He added during job hunts, "You're interviewing the employer just as much as they're interviewing you."

Small Business Events

February 17, 2022
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Time: TBD
 Webcast Meeting Online

February 23, 2022
Business Advisory Council
 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
 Webcast Meeting Online

March 17, 2022
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Time: TBD
 Webcast Meeting Online

April 21, 2022
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Time: TBD
 Webcast Meeting Online

May 19, 2022
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Time: TBD
 Webcast Meeting Online

May 25, 2022
Business Advisory Council
 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
 Webcast Meeting Online

June 16, 2022
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Time: TBD
 Webcast Meeting Online



February 22, 2022
How to Do Business with the State of California
 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 Online Workshop

California buys everything from office supplies to construction and goats for grazing. Last year, the state spent more than \$10 billion on goods and services and \$2 billion went to small businesses. This free workshop teaches small business owners how to get those contracts. Learn about certification of Small Businesses (SB) and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE), California's procurement website, Cal eProcure, and finding bid opportunities. Hosted by the Norcal Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) and the California Department of General Services (DGS).



May 3, 2022
SAM.gov
 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
 Online Workshop

The U.S. Federal Government is the largest single purchaser of goods and services in the world. Join this class if you're interested in improving your shot at \$500 billion in contracts awarded each year by the government. This workshop takes a look at SAM.gov, the site where companies can register to do business with the federal government. Ten online websites for federal contracts and awards are now merged onto SAM.gov. Learn how to navigate the site and what role it plays when bidding on federal contracts. Hosted by **California Capital Procurement Technical Center (PTAC)**. (Photo courtesy of Pexels fauxels)



March 1, 2022
How to Access Capital for Your Business with CALCAP & SBA
 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM
 Online Workshop

Do you need capital for your business? Attend this workshop to learn about funding sources, loan programs, what lenders look for in a loan application, federal contracting programs and the importance of a business plan. Hosted by the California Capital Women's Business Center and the U.S. Small Business Administration. (Photo courtesy of LinkedIn Sales Solutions on Unsplash)

Did You Know?

More than 39 million people call California home. It's a great place to live, but Californians also have to prepare for crises such as floods, fires, earthquakes, landslides and drought. Whenever disasters strike, the Department of General Services (DGS) turns to a special list of small businesses on the **SB/DVBE Emergency Registry**. Companies certified as small businesses (SB) and/or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE) have signed up for the list that allows the state to simplify the procurement process in times of need. The firms must be able to respond quickly any time of the day or night and provide goods and services from a list of emergency categories. That list includes things needed for base camp operations, communications, debris removal, fencing, traffic control, vehicles, heavy equipment, security, food and beverage, lighting, medical, modular buildings and much more. If your business can respond on-demand during a crisis or disaster, sign up for the SB/DVBE Emergency Registry at the **DGS Shared Services Portal**.



Cheaper Tickets to Ride in Chicago: Passengers riding on buses and trains in Chicago are about to get a big break. With ridership sagging at less than 50% of pre-pandemic levels, the **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)** announced it **plans to permanently cut prices** after discounting fares last summer. CTA believes the test program produced 10 million additional rides. The fare plan would eliminate transfer fees, cut multi-day pass prices by 34%, drop one-day passes by 50% to \$5 and lower monthly passes from \$105 to \$75. (Photo courtesy of CTA)

High-Speed Rail Beats Flying in Italy: Passengers are hopping aboard Italian high-speed trains in droves. Studies show ridership jumped from 6.5 million in 2008 to 40 million in 2018. More than two-thirds of travelers take the four-hour train trip between Rome and Milan, the country's busiest route. Many experts believe high-speed trains played a huge role in the **demise of Italy's Alitalia Airlines**, which ceased operations in October. Construction on a 27-mile section of high-speed rail between Milan and Venice begins soon and is expected to be completed in 2026. (Photo courtesy of Trenitalia)



New Trains for Brightline Florida: **Brightline Florida** has some new eco-friendly trains. The first of 20 trainsets **rolled off the assembly line** at the **Siemens Mobility** plant in South Sacramento four months ago. The passenger coaches feature leather seats, Wi-Fi and touchless bathrooms. Sandwiched between diesel-electric locomotives, they'll go up to 125 miles per hour. They're bound for Brightline's new expansion route that will run from Miami to the Orlando International Airport. Crews expect to complete construction between West Palm Beach and Orlando by the end of 2022. (Photo courtesy of Brightline)

Draft 2022 Business Plan Coming in Early February

At the California High-Speed Rail Authority's January Board meeting, CEO Brian Kelly provided a sneak peek of what will be in the Draft 2022 Business Plan scheduled for release on February 4. While the draft plan will serve as a "bridge" document since the 2020 Business Plan was released in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will discuss milestones and progress since April 2021. It will also preview what will be covered in the 2023 Project Update Report.

The most significant update in the Draft 2022 Business Plan is new federal funding opportunities. There are about \$57 billion in funds for which the Authority can compete, and we're developing a grants strategy. With opportunities for more stable funding, we will work in the following five areas:

- Deliver an electrified, double-track operating segment connecting Merced, Fresno and Bakersfield as soon as possible.
- Environmentally clear the full 500-mile system.
- Advance design statewide as each project section is cleared, preparing them for future construction funding.
- Leverage new federal and state funds for targeted statewide investments, particularly in shared corridors to provide immediate and long-term benefits.
- Re-evaluate funding scenarios to extend high-speed rail beyond the Central Valley to the Bay Area.

The plan will also include key updates on topics such as the requested appropriation of the remaining \$4.2 billion in Proposition 1A funds by the legislature, Central Valley

construction progress, ongoing organizational changes, advancing design in the Merced and Bakersfield extensions, environmental clearances and progress in Northern and Southern California.

As a preview of the 2023 Project Update Report, the report will update funding strategies which includes a program baseline budget and schedule, procurements, new ridership/revenue forecasts and capital cost estimates.

With the release of the Draft 2022 Business Plan, a 60-day public review will commence. We'll accept comments online, via email, mail and at Authority Board meetings in February and March. We anticipate it will go back to the Board on April 21 for action and direction on preparing the final plan. We expect to submit it to the legislature by May 1.

Annie Parker

High-Speed Rail Boosts Economy

High-speed rail continues to put a shine on the Golden State's economy.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority's latest economic report shows workers and small businesses are reaping the biggest dividends on about \$8.5 billion the Authority invested in high-speed rail between 2006 and July of last year.

During that time, the nation's first high-speed rail project awarded contracts to 634 small business. The report shows 616 of those small businesses are headquartered in California and the Authority has paid them more than \$970 million. During fiscal year 2020-2021, high-speed rail supported people with 10,100 full-time jobs.

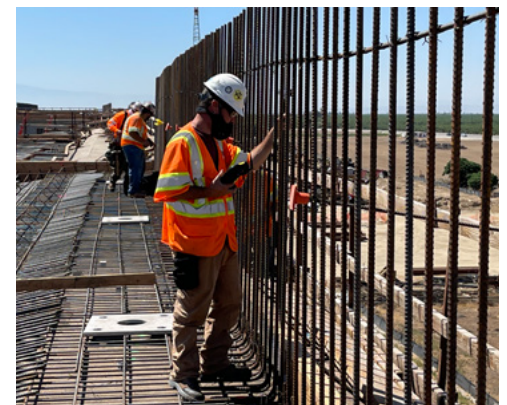
"High-speed rail provides a major boost for small businesses and workers throughout the state," explained Board Reporting and Business-Economics Branch Chief Derek

Boughton. "They spend their hard-earned money on housing, groceries, clothing and other retail, recreation and more. In turn, the places they patronize generate taxes which go back into city, county and state coffers. It's a win-win for everyone."

Overall, high-speed rail investment produced \$4.8 to \$5.2 billion in labor income and \$12.7 to \$13.7 billion in total economic activity.

The Authority also has a commitment to jobs and training opportunities for people living in disadvantaged communities. The economic report shows 56% of our total expenditures have occurred in disadvantaged communities throughout California, meaning high-speed rail is playing an important role in bolstering the economy in those areas and helping those most in need.

Karen Massie



The Authority's latest Economic Report shows the high-speed rail project has paid workers about \$4.8 to \$5.2 billion. Those workers spend money in their communities as they pay for housing, groceries, clothing, recreation and more. That has helped spur a whopping \$12.7 to \$13.7 billion in economic activity.

Bess Utility Solutions: A Locating Legacy



Beneath our feet, millions of miles of jumbled pipes and twisted cables transport water, gas and electricity to homes and businesses throughout the country.

Digging into the ground can be hazardous, and state-of-the-art technology and expertise are necessary to reduce the risk of hitting buried utilities. Hayward-based **Bess Utility Solutions (BESS)** is a family firm with a legacy rooted in finding and moving underground utilities during the safe excavation of job sites and infrastructure projects.

Jose Bohorquez had aspirations of becoming an engineer at a young age. After graduating from college, he left his homeland of Peru and came to California to pursue the American dream. An entrepreneurial spirit resulted in the purchase of a fledgling materials testing and inspection laboratory.

When customers requested non-invasive concrete structure scanning, Bohorquez became interested in ground penetrating radar (GPR). At the time, most underground scanning required the use of X-ray devices, and GPR was more affordable and eliminated the need to evacuate a construction site due to radiation exposure.

A demand for the technology prompted him to form a second company focused on Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) services. BESS grew into a family business, when Bohorquez's wife Martha and his sons, Michael, Anthony and Joseph, joined the company. "Since I was 16, I was always involved," recalled Vice President and CEO Joseph Bohorquez, "We started with just a few people, and now we have over 145 employees."



A Bess Utility Solutions crew prepares to drill a hole in the ground using Keyhole technology. The equipment can safely and accurately bore through asphalt and concrete surfaces. The company has been locating, mapping and moving underground utilities for more than 25 years.

Regrettably, the family lost Jose to COVID last year. "It was a devastating situation. We miss him every day, but it's a part of who we are now," said Joseph.

The company continues to carry on with its mission. "The **purpose of our business** is to locate and map underground utilities and subsurface structures to protect the integrity, and most importantly, the safety of our community," stated Joseph. "We are there to use our equipment to locate those utilities and document them so our clients can safely excavate around them."

BESS has dedicated personnel who provide locating, potholing and surveying services for the high-speed rail alignment from Madera down to Fresno.

"We're union," Joseph explained, "We have an excellent training program for utility locators." The classes provide hands-on training for an assortment of equipment. He added, "Whenever we announce that we're hiring, it spreads like wildfire, and people from all over come to join our team."

Marketing representative Diana Layseca went further. "BESS is a certified Small

"The purpose of our business is to locate and map underground utilities and subsurface structures to protect the integrity, and most importantly, the safety of our community."

Joseph Bohorquez
 Vice President/CEO
 BESS Utility Solutions

Business, Minority Business Enterprise and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, which participated in numerous outreach events," she said. "The outstanding work we delivered and the networking with high-speed rail helps our company stand out."

As the California High-Speed Rail program presses on, BESS and the Bohorquez family forge ahead with Jose's locating legacy. "There are many opportunities to help build the infrastructure that's going to connect different parts of the state," Joseph concluded, "I am very excited and blessed to be part of this project."

Anthony Lopez

1. Underground utilities can't hide from Bess Utility Solutions. Worker Jesse Cardenas locates and marks utilities using an Electromagnetic Locator (EML) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR).
2. Bess Utility Solutions workers conduct an inspection of an underground pipe using CCTV (Closed Circuit Television). A camera attached to a monitor can see inside the pipe and determine if it's structurally sound.
3. Bess Utility Solutions is moving pipes and cables for water, gas, electricity, phones and more for the high-speed rail project. Workers Jose Bernal and Gibson Falepouno expose underground utilities with hydro excavation equipment to collect depth and diameter data.



Business Owners' Iron Will Produces Steel Products for High-Speed Rail



“What makes us unique is being able to take shop drawings and knowing how they will fit in the field for installation. We take on projects that others won’t give you the time of day.”

Rodney Moffitt
Co-owner
Iron Industries, Inc.



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Iron Industries, Inc. Chief Financial Officer Robert Moffitt proudly says his family-owned business offers services second to none no matter what project they’re working on.

The company originally started in 2001 as a manufacturer and erector of metal buildings. In 2004, Robert and his brother, Rodney, became partial owners of the firm. By 2018, the brothers took over Iron Industries Inc. and since then, the company has evolved. Today, the certified small business is a steel fabricator based in Hanford providing metal products throughout California and other states.

After attending a small-business informational event in Kings County in 2019, they began providing services for Construction Package 2-3 throughout Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties.

The company provides trash rakes which are installed on box culverts for stormwater systems and irrigation ditches. These fabricat-

1. Iron Industries manufactured and erected many of the metal shelters located in the Central Valley. Farmers use them to house cattle, equipment and crops after they’re harvested.
2. Parts for trash rakes are ready to be assembled by Iron Industries. The Hanford company is installing dozens of them on irrigation ditches and stormwater drains in Construction Package 2-3 of the high-speed rail project.

ed steel components prevent dirt and debris from going under roadways and the railway and stopping waterflow.

In an interview, Robert humbly describes Iron’s work as miscellaneous steel pieces. Dragados Flatiron Joint Venture (DFJV) small business manager Bjorn Nilsen insists it’s so

much more.

“We have irrigation districts all over this area. They provide water for thousands of farms. As you can imagine, it’s really important to keep irrigation ditches clear,” said Nilsen regarding Iron’s work. “These trash rakes are really big and they’re strong.

If something does get plugged up, irrigation districts can use an excavator or backhoe to pull debris up against the trash rake until they can dig everything out of there.”

Getting the trash rakes made locally also saves a lot of money because DFJV doesn’t have to pay to ship them from somewhere else.

According to Robert, to hop on board and work with the high-speed rail project was a huge opportunity to get their feet wet on a massive public works project.

“This has been one of our most complicated state projects,” laughed Moffitt, but Iron’s work speaks for itself. “This was the first time we fabricated these types of [products], but we can fabricate anything with the plans.

What makes us unique is being able to take shop drawings and knowing how they will fit in the field for installation. We take on projects that others won’t give you the time of day.”

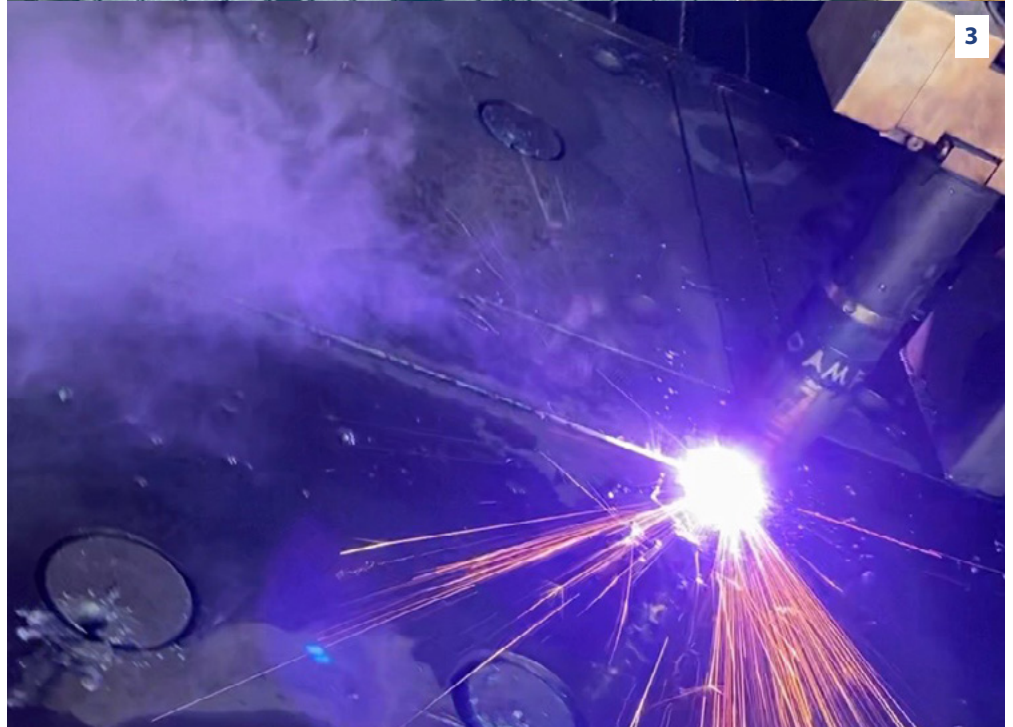
When asked about high-speed rail coming to the Central Valley, Moffitt didn’t hide his excitement.

“It’s innovative and having the ability to get across the state is something that I think everyone wants to see happen,” added Moffitt. “I would love to see it go from north to the south end of the state, but you have to start somewhere.”

Augie Blancas

1.&2. Iron Industries manufactures and installs trash rakes, giant grates that keep trash and other debris from plugging up irrigation culverts and stormwater drains along the high-speed rail alignment.

3. Iron Industries co-owner Rodney Moffit said his firm can fabricate anything out of metal on a plasma cutting table. The device uses a thermal torch to carve out shapes by vaporizing metal into powder and then using air to pull that powder from the work surface.



California High-Speed Rail Authority Wins Prestigious Honor

Another honor is cause for celebration at the California High-Speed Rail Authority. The **Sacramento Chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS)** has tapped the Authority for its prestigious Employer of the Year Award. This annual award recognizes a transportation organization for outstanding leadership in mentoring women in the transportation field, providing opportunities for upward mobility for women and having women at the highest levels of leadership.

“A talented, highly-capable and diverse staff is a pre-requisite for success on a project of this magnitude,” said Authority CEO Brian Kelly. “This recognition validates our approach and is a testament to the tremendous work that our diverse staff has done and will continue to do in advancing the California high-speed rail program.”

“I am proud of the staff and leadership of High-Speed Rail in promoting diversity in the workplace and asking our partners in the rail industry to do the same,” said Authority Board of Directors Vice Chair Nancy Miller. “It is heartening to attend meetings with the engineers, the attorneys, the systems operators and planners to find a group of diverse and knowledgeable staff assisting at every level.”

More than half of the Authority’s total workforce is female – as well as the majority of the executive team. Many of them have been appointed under the administration of Governor Gavin Newsom. Major initiatives and programs led by women at the Authority include strategic delivery; legal counsel; strategic communications; legislative affairs; information technology; planning and sustainability; administration and human resources; diversity, equity and inclusion; and regional leadership.

The Authority will be on hand to pick up its award when WTS Sacramento holds its annual awards and scholarship event in March.

WTS is an international organization dedicated to shaping the future of transportation for the public good through the global advancement of women. The Sacramento Chapter supports hundreds of professionals not only within the Sacramento Region but also throughout Northern California and the Central Valley.

Sofia Gutierrez



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1. Field Engineer **Amanda Martinez** is an associate project manager in Construction Package 4 in Kern County. She has taken on many roles working across the 22-mile segment including dealing with utilities, structural work and wildlife crossings.
2. Senior Right-of-Way Agent **Stephanie Rendon Fuentes** works in the Fresno office of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. She helps acquire parcels for the high-speed rail project. The complex process involves negotiations with property owners, appraisers, utilities, government workers and more.
3. On her job as a public information officer, **Sofia Gutierrez** has her hands full at the California High-Speed Rail Authority. She writes press releases, stories for the Small Business Newsletter and other publications and posts on social media. Whatever the task, Gutierrez said she enjoys sharing high-speed rail news with the public.

Full Speed Ahead on Environmental Work in 2022

The California High-Speed Rail Authority continues to make significant progress on identifying the final route for the high-speed rail system from the Bay Area to the Los Angeles Basin.

Most notably, on January 20, the Authority's Board of Directors approved the final environmental documentation for the Burbank to Los Angeles project section of the high-speed rail system. This project section is the second high-speed rail section in Southern California to be environmentally cleared, and it is the first in the Los Angeles Basin.

"Today's approval represents a historic milestone and brings us closer to providing the first high-speed rail system in the United States," said Authority CEO Brian Kelly. "We appreciate the continued support and collaboration with local and regional agencies and stakeholders as we work together to improve transportation in California."

"Today's approval represents a historic milestone and brings us closer to providing the first high-speed rail system in the United States."

Brian Kelly
CEO
California High-Speed Rail Authority

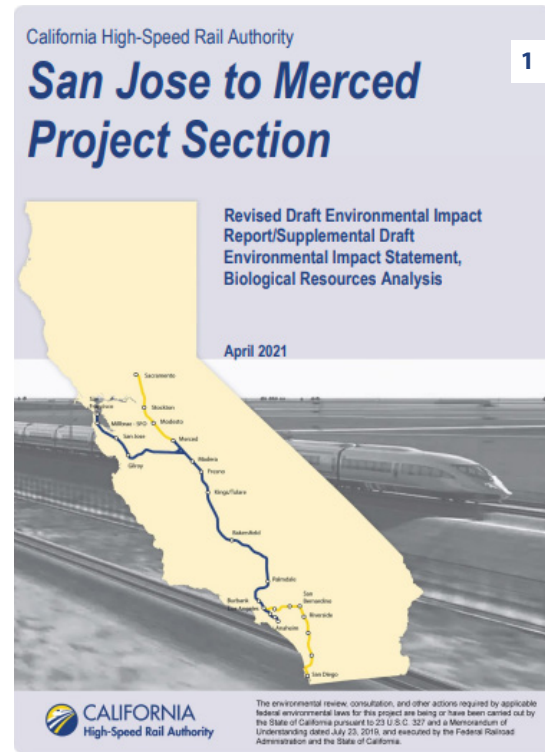
Also in Southern California, the Authority will issue the draft environmental documents for the **Palmdale to Burbank** project section for public review and comment in the coming weeks. This section is approximately 35 miles long and will connect the **Palmdale Transportation Center** with the Hollywood Burbank Airport. It will involve approximately 22 to 28 miles of tunneling depending on the final alignment.

The route between San Francisco to the Central Valley is also on track to be finalized in the first half of 2022. The Authority expects to issue the final environmental document for the **San Jose to Merced** project section and later submit it to the Board for potential action. The San Francisco to San Jose project section final documentation will be issued in the spring.

Achieving these environmental milestones is more important than ever as we continue to establish new and improved partnerships with the federal government. We have reengaged with the Federal Railroad Administration, which is essential to delivering a mega-project of this magnitude. We also have received support from President Biden and his administration, and last year, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla visited our construction sites in Fresno, marking the first time a sitting senator has visited high-speed rail construction. With the passage of the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** in November, we are in a better position than ever to compete for federal funding opportunities to move high-speed rail forward.

Annie Parker

1. The California High-Speed Rail Authority expects to issue the final environmental document for the **San Jose to Merced** project section in the coming weeks and hopes to finish work on that document before June.
2. The Authority plans to issue draft environmental documents for the Palmdale to Burbank project section. This is a conceptual rendering of what the high-speed rail station may look like at the Palmdale Transportation Center.
3. U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-Calif.), left, and Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.), right, have joined President Joe Biden in supporting high-speed rail. Last year, Padilla and Costa toured construction sites in the Central Valley, including the award winning-San Joaquin River Viaduct, north of Fresno.



Real Property Team Steps Up to Meet Land Challenge

“I believe [the challenge] brought more camaraderie to the group. Our team has never been stronger and more united.”

Dennis Kim
 Director of Real Property
 California High-Speed Rail Authority

Dennis Kim is a man who always tries his best. Just ask the people who work with him.

California Governor Gavin Newsom tapped the 39-year-old as the Director of Real Property for the California High-Speed Rail Authority almost a year ago. When he arrived, he had already spent seven years on the high-speed rail project. “I started working for the Authority as a consultant,” he explained.

In 2013, he joined the **Cordoba Corporation**, a company that’s had a role in planning, designing and constructing the high-speed rail project since 1988. Kim, a lawyer and a project management professional, held several managerial positions at Cordoba including Southern California Project Manager, Third Party Agreements Manager, and Deputy Director of Compliance, Special Projects and Third Parties.

In 2019, he went to work for **WSP**, the Authority’s Rail Delivery Partner. There, he served as Assistant Vice President and Deputy Director of Real Property.

“As a consultant, it is extremely important to always provide several recommendations rooted in sound analysis and be solutions oriented,” Kim said.

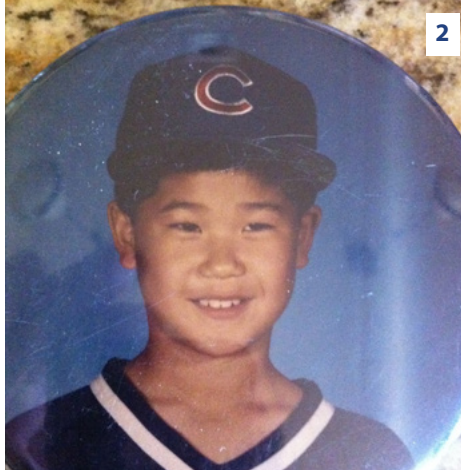


When he came to work for the Authority, he brought along his goal-setting and problem-solving abilities. He also displayed an unflinching determination learned from his parents, who successfully raised a family after immigrating from South Korea to the United States with virtually nothing in their pockets. “They always told me to put forth your best effort. Always improve. Always look out for and support others,” Kim recalled.

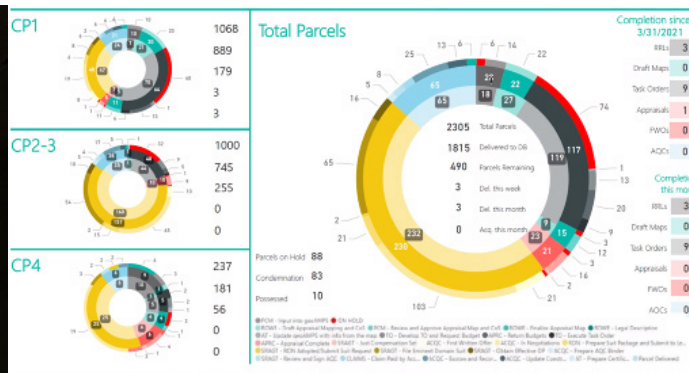
1. Before Governor Newsom appointed him as the Authority’s Director of Real Property, Dennis Kim spent seven years working on the high-speed rail project as a consultant. He held a variety of positions including Deputy Director of Real Property, South-ern California Project Manager, Third Party Agreements Manager.
2. Dennis Kim (right) wasted no time getting down to business after the Authority’s Chief Counsel Alicia Fowler (left) swore him in as the Director of Real Property. He has set a new tone with his team, leading by example and inspiring creativity and enthusiasm for what can often be a daunting role at the Authority.



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Adam Foster (ROS) receiving the award with Mark Rowan (Deputy Director of Real Property) and Dennis Kim (Director of Real Property)

He also faced a huge task. “There was a critical need to acquire parcels to finish building the high-speed rail test track that’s currently under construction in the Central Valley,” he recalled. “The real property team needed to deliver 490 parcels for Construction Packages 1-4.”

He wasted no time setting a new tone with the team, leading by example and inspiring creativity and enthusiasm for what can often be a daunting role at the Authority.

His leadership style has inspired his coworkers who continue to jump over the high bar set for them several times. “The real property team was able to deliver 30 parcels in May and June,” Kim explained. “In September, they got 33 and delivered another 30 in December

2021. In 8 months, the amazing real property team went from 78% of the properties needed for Construction Packages 1-4 to 88%.”

The experience has impacted the real property unit. “I believe it brought more camaraderie to the group,” Kim pointed out. “Our team has never been stronger and more united. I was cheering them on.”

Kim is not resting on his laurels. “The next big challenge is getting 90% of all parcels needed for the high-speed rail route from Madera to Bakersfield by the end of July 2022, and we want 95% in December 2022,” Kim declared.

Karen Massie

1. Look at this face. This is Director of Real Property Dennis Kim as a toddler in Chicago. He thanks his parents for instilling him with the determination that serves him well today.
2. As a youngster, Dennis Kim rooted for the Chicago Cubs and his other hometown teams, the Chicago Bears, Chicago Bulls and Chicago White Sox. He’s still a fan today.
3. During a virtual presentation, Dennis Kim explains goals set for acquiring parcels for the high-speed rail alignment in the Central Valley.
4. Dennis Kim’s right-of-way team was honored for its work in 2021. His goal for 2022 is getting 90% of all the parcels needed for the high-speed rail route from Madera to Bakersfield by the end of July.

Karen Massie—the Voice of High-Speed Rail

Karen Massie—you may not know her by name, but you likely recognize her voice! You may also recognize her as the managing editor of this newsletter.

She joined the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) in 2012, giving not only her voice, but her hard work, passion and dedication to all she does. She had quite a life before she got here.

She grew up in Xenia, near Dayton, Ohio, where expectations were high for her to excel. Her parents, grandmother, three brothers and many other relatives graduated from college. Her father had his own law practice for more than 50 years. Her mother headed the church music department and ran food services for athletic games at Central State University.

Massie was a kid who loved to sing, dance and act, leading her to the **University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM)** where she majored in opera and musical theatre.

She left school to star in three well-known musicals, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *God Spell* and *Tommy*. “Teachers at CCM would tell us if you get an opportunity to do something in your career you have to do it, and school will be always be here if you want to come back,” Massie recalled.

Her life changed when she began touring the Midwest with a band. Massie belted out funk, rhythm-and-blues and jazz while traveling to new places. She said, “I loved it because I come from a family that traveled and took vacations.”

When living out of suitcase got old, Massie enrolled at **Ohio State University** where

she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. She spent the next three decades in broadcasting.

Her first stop in 1980 was at **WHIO-AM-FM-TV** in Dayton. “I was an anchor/reporter on the radio station and a reporter for the TV station,” she explained. In 18 months, she landed the morning anchor job at **WSYX-TV** (Channel 6) in Columbus, Ohio. She debuted a segment called *Health Watch*, which allowed her to be in operating rooms reporting on cutting edge medical treatments, including organ transplants.

In December 1987, she drove across the country to be the weekend anchor at Sacramento’s **ABC10** TV station.

“I loved chasing stories.” Massie laughed. “I got to dig up dirt on criminals and politicians. I really liked being able to help people, but sometimes things were downright scary.”

She recounted covering the aftermath of the Rodney King police brutality trial in Los Angeles in 1992. Outside of a store that was being looted, someone shot at her and a photographer who was shooting the scene.

“There were some close calls covering wildfires.” She said, “One time, my photographer and I were saved by a plane and a helicopter dumping retardant and water on flames that were closing in.”

She has a room full of awards recognizing 25 years on ABC10. It includes a Salute to Excellence Award from the National Association of Black Journalists for a 2006 series entitled “Race and Education.” It compared how Sacramento districts treated students of color and their schools differently than other area schools.



Karen Massie emceed Sacramento’s Meadowview Jazz Festival for more than 10 years. It was a day of fun, food and music that drew more than 10,000 people to South Sacramento.

Along the way, she got a chance to race cars, a love developed from growing up with brothers. Massie spent 8 years racing a Formula Ford with her brother Kevin, who had his own race car. She won the Solo I Time Trials her first year on the tracks.

In 2012, she joined the Authority. At the time, there were only 28 state workers and less than 100 small businesses assigned to the high-speed rail project and construction hadn’t begun.

Over the last decade, Massie helped shape the Authority’s message. From tracking audio to writing stories for magazines and op-eds for the CEO, and managing the small business newsletter, she has touched all aspects of the communications department.

“Making sure Californians know how the train will change their lives is why I enjoy the work,” she said.

Massie’s passions include church, singing, directing choirs and spending time with her family. She hosts the Frank Withrow 8th Grade Awards, named for her late husband, a poet, community activist and long-time Sacramento educator.

Now she’s preparing for her next chapter in life – retirement. “I am ready to take on the world,” she joked.

Traveling is on the list of things she wants to do.

Once the trains are up and running, we hope to hear Massie’s voice welcoming people onboard high-speed rail trains.

She added, “I can’t wait to jump on those trains, too.”

Sofia Gutierrez

1. Massie served as an anchor/reporter on ABC10 KXTV in Sacramento. She also learned to shoot and edit her own video. Here, she can be seen videotaping a student/faculty protest at Sacramento State University.
2. For eight years, Massie and her brother, Kevin, drove Formula Ford racecars in the San Francisco Region of the Sport Car Club of America. The top speed on her car was about 140 mph.
3. Quite often, Massie’s TV news reporting days ended with a station live truck beaming her story from some location in Ohio and California. The hours were long and stressful, but she was known for eliciting laughter from coworkers to ease the pressure.



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Fresno City College Students Network After A Year of Distance Learning

After more than a year of virtual gatherings, the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Communications and Outreach team was eager to get back into the field and meet people in person.

The air crackled with excitement when the Authority and the Fresno City College engineering department hosted a **net-working event for students on campus** last October. Dressed in business casual attire with notebooks in hand and questions prepared, more than 30 students came ready to meet with engineering professionals.

Public Information Officer Augie Blancas and Student Outreach Coordinator Yaqeline Castro kicked off the day with an overview of the high-speed rail project. Then students sat in on a panel with three professional engineers working on project construction in the Central Valley.

Bianca Perez, an I Will Ride alumni and utilities manager with design-builder Tutor-Perini/Zachry/Parsons, joined Senior Transportation Engineers Gilberto Baca and Robert Campbell on the panel. They talked about their time in college, pathway to an engineering career and responsibilities with the high-speed rail project.

Baca explained why networking events are so important. "You meet a role model, find out what they're doing and [students] can see [themselves] doing that too," he said.

The event also featured a lunch and learn session where students sat down and chatted with the professionals in small groups.

Distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many students, including those at Fresno City College, to miss out on in-person connections with their peers, career networking events and simply having the chance to be on a college campus. When the opportunity to sponsor an in-person event arose, the Authority worked with Fresno City College staff to ensure students could attend a safe and socially distanced event following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.

"I've heard from engineers in the past, but it's all been on Zoom," said engineering student Jessica Romero. "It's great to finally see engineers in person sharing their experiences and offering helpful advice."

Engineering instructor Liz Adams has played an integral role in the Authority's student outreach efforts at Fresno City

College. She connected with representatives at the Authority years ago and has continuously worked with staff to help expose students to the opportunities of working on the high-speed rail program.

"When [we] have guest speakers who are from the valley and towns [students] are familiar with, and they're working on these projects and living these careers, it really makes a difference," noted Adams.

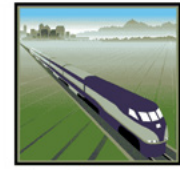
The Fresno City College networking event was an effort of the Authority's **I Will Ride** student education program, which is designed to inform, educate, inspire and collaborate with students and young professionals on the nation's first high-speed rail system. Keeping equity and opportunity in mind, we strive to reach groups historically excluded from careers in transportation.

Yaqeline Castro



Engineering students posed with I Will Ride signs after meeting high-speed rail engineers at a lunch and networking event at Fresno City College last November. The Authority's Student Outreach Coordinator Yaqeline Castro (left) and Fresno City College Engineering Professor Liz Adams (4th from left) hosted the event.

Rolling and Working on the San Joaquins



San Joaquin
Joint Powers Authority

The **Amtrak San Joaquins** are on a roll. Passengers cheered last year as more trains and buses were added to Northern California Amtrak routes. They can thank the **San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA)**, the agency that's responsible for the administration and management of the San Joaquins, Amtrak passenger trains that run between Sacramento, Bakersfield and Oakland.

When COVID-19 began sweeping through the country in April 2020, the number of riders on the San Joaquins dropped by a staggering 90%. Like transit systems around the nation, SJJPA acted quickly to keep passengers and workers safe. Café Car service was suspended. Station lobbies were closed in Hanford, Fresno, Merced and Modesto, and that wasn't all.

"SJJPA suspended three of its seven daily round trip trains," explained Marketing Manager David Lipari. "We also suspended some Thruway Bus service. We had to do it to preserve our budget and prioritize essential connections."

But by last June, a growing passenger demand sparked welcome changes. The SJJPA slowly began putting suspended trains back on track.

According to Lipari, "As of January 2022, we had restored two of our suspended round trip trains, bringing the total operating service to 6 daily round-trips. We have also restored much of the suspended Thruway Bus service while simultaneously optimizing many of the routes for better service to communities."

Ridership has rebounded steadily to 65% of normal. More riders will help keep the SJJPA's five-year plan on course.

It includes the **Valley Rail Project** which got a \$500 million boost in 2018 when the

SJJPA partnered with the **San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC)** and received a grant from the **Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program**.

"This effort will lead to two additional San Joaquins round trip trains. That means an 8th and 9th daily round trip between the San Joaquin Valley and Sacramento within the next five years," explained Manager of Regional Initiatives Dan Leavitt. "We also want to build a new station in Oakley and relocate the Madera Station."

Last year, the SJJPA partnered with the SJRRC and other agencies to secure a \$100 million **Trade Corridor Enhancement Program** grant for the **Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project**. Located just south of Stockton, it's a place where railroad tracks intersect with each other forcing trains on one set of tracks to wait until other trains have passed.

"Completion of this \$237 million project will eliminate the biggest freight bottleneck in California," Leavitt declared.

Then there's the Merced Intermodal Track Connector (MITC) Project, a partnership that includes the SJJPA, California High-Speed Rail Authority and the City of Merced. It calls for construction of a new track which will allow the San Joaquins to share a newly constructed Merced station with future Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and high-speed rail trains. They will be a major connection for people traveling between California's Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area. A second SJJPA project calls for building a layover and maintenance facility to serve the San Joaquins and ACE.

At a cost of about \$200 million, the two projects will mean lots of work for prime contractors and small businesses.



1.& 2. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, safety has been a priority on all Amtrak trains including the San Joaquins that serve cities between Sacramento, Bakersfield and Oakland. All passengers and workers are required to wear masks. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority also increased the frequency for cleaning trains and sanitizing touch surfaces.

SJPA Executive Director Stacey Mortensen encourages companies to get on board.

“We’re always interested in working with small businesses. With our current service and **Valley Rail Expansion**, there are many contract opportunities,” Mortensen explained. “The best way for small business to participate in our current and upcoming contract opportunities is to register on **PlanetBids**.”

The SJPA is optimistic that it will receive more money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill signed by President Biden last November. “We are currently evaluating the new federal grade crossing program and the potential new state grade crossing program criteria to develop a list of competitive projects throughout the corridor,” Mortensen said.

Meanwhile, the SJPA is encouraging passengers to join others who have returned to traveling on the San Joaquins buses and trains. They are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis, and passengers and employees are required to wear masks.

“We’ll get you where you’re going safely and you can use your laptop or phone to work, study or play games,” Lipari said. “The San Joaquins are a service that primarily connects California families and university students to campuses. We’re proud to serve California in this way.”

Karen Massie

1. Most of the Amtrak San Joaquins trains and buses that were suspended due to the coronavirus in 2020 have been restored.
2. The proposed Merced Intermodal Track Connector Project will allow the San Joaquins, high-speed rail and the Altamont Corridor Express to share a station in Merced.
3. In January, ridership on the Amtrak San Joaquins had bounced back to 65% of normal.
4. Building a flyover bridge will keep trains moving at the Stockton Diamond. Currently known as the busiest freight bottleneck in California, the intersection forces trains to wait while other trains pass.



High-Speed Rail Wins Grant Award

California's high-speed rail program has received a major boost from the federal government. In November, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded a **\$24 million grant** to the Authority via the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

"High-speed rail is about connecting Californians and our diverse communities," said Authority CEO Brian Kelly. "As we build this transformative system, we continue to work and collaborate with communities throughout the state to create jobs, spur economic

development and improve quality of life."

The funds will be used for crucial safety and construction projects in and around the city of Wasco located in the heart of Construction Package 4. They include lowering State Route 46 to accommodate trucks passing under the railroad, preventing heavy-duty trucks from driving in and polluting nearby neighborhoods, and adding a roundabout and sidewalk to help improve safety. The money will also go toward working with Wasco officials to improve land use and economic development.

"It's a great example of multi-agency teamwork and recognition of significant local needs," said City Manager Scott Hurlbert. "This funding will resolve a tremendous financial burden for the City and help us move our community forward with confidence."

The Authority is eligible to apply for more RAISE grants in the future. When President Biden signed the bipartisan infrastructure bill approved by Congress, it added an extra \$1.5 billion annually for the next five years to the RAISE grant program.

Augie Blancas/Karen Massie

Congress Delivers Big Boost for Infrastructure and Jobs

Following months of negotiations, Congress approved President Biden's \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill in November. The measure will pour \$550 billion into rail, roads, bridges, water projects, jobs, internet and more.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority and other rail systems around the U.S. are cheering because the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes \$66 billion for rail and represents the largest investment in passenger rail since Amtrak was created in 1971. According to the Biden administration, \$12 billion in that pot of funds will go towards partnership grants for intercity service including high-speed rail, \$5 billion for rail improvement and safety grants, and \$3 billion for grade crossing safety improvements.

The Biden administration said there's another \$39 billion for modernizing transit and improving accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities. Together with exist-

ing transit programs, the federal government is guaranteeing \$89.9 billion for public transit over five years. That's the largest federal investment ever made for public transit in U.S. history.

In December during a Facebook Live talkback with the Sacramento Press Club, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg responded to a question about the Biden administration's stance on high-speed rail in California. "Our view is that Americans deserve excellent high-speed rail," Buttigieg said. "California has been piloting and pioneering this work and taken on a lot of risk as well." He added, "It's important for the economic competitiveness of the country as a whole. And the opportunity in California is a big example of that."

CEO Brian Kelly also touted the bill's benefits when the Authority's Board of Directors met in November. "This bill has on the order of \$58 billion in new funding above baseline figures for a variety of federal

funding pots, many of which we will compete in and have competed in," Kelly said.

Kelly pointed to the \$24 million RAISE grant that the Authority recently received from the U.S. Department of Transportation for construction projects around Wasco. He explained the infrastructure bill will add an extra \$1.5 billion annually to the grant over the next five years.

Meanwhile, Kelly stressed that the Authority is keeping an eye on a second piece of legislation that Biden calls the Build Back Better Act. It's been passed by the House and is slated to be heard in the Senate. A passenger rail improvement, modernization and emissions reduction program in the bill includes \$10 billion for high-speed rail funding for planning, construction and upgrades. Kelly said the funding would provide up to 90% of the state matching funds necessary for California to receive federal funds from the measure.

Karen Massie

High-Speed Rail Happenings



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1. Crews work on the falsework for four arches that will tower over the Cedar Viaduct that straddles State Route 99, just south of Fresno.

2. The abutment walls are up for the Tulare Street undercrossing along G Street in Fresno. Crews are working on three retaining walls and a pump station that will help drain any water that may accumulate along the underpass.



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3.& 4. At the Kimberlina Road Viaduct, ironworkers are tying rebar for the deck of the structure located south of Wasco. Concrete for the abutments and wingwalls have been placed and concrete for the lower deck will be poured in the coming months.



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5. More than 40 girders, weighing 157,000 pounds each, make up the pergola section of the Wasco Viaduct. When complete, the structure will take high-speed trains over existing BNSF freight tracks and be nearly 2,000 feet long.

6. At Adams Avenue in Fresno County, crews are nearly finished with five concrete footings, two abutment walls and columns needed for the substructure of the Adams Avenue Grade Separation.



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7. With the deck formed atop the Peach Avenue Viaduct, construction crews are stripping out post tensioning block-outs so they can reinforce the concrete by pre-stressing it. The structure is located just south of the Conejo Viaduct in Fresno County.

8. Crews are working on the foundation of the Tule River Viaduct in Tulare County. More than 75 columns will need to be installed to carry high-speed trains over the Tule River, BNSF rail line and State Route 43. When finished, the viaduct will be more than 3,573 feet long.



LATEST VIDEOS: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEDRAIL



February Construction Update

Work is progressing on the Conejo Viaduct in Fresno County near Peach and Willow Avenues. On the south portion of the structure, forms have been stripped off because concrete edge beams have cured and are strong enough to support their weight and any load placed on them. On the north side, crews are pouring concrete to form more edge beams. More than 1,000 cubic yards of concrete has been poured.



Interested in doing business with High-Speed Rail?

Visit www.ConnectHSR.com



SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

AS OF NOVEMBER 20, 2021

653 Certified Small Businesses working on the high-speed rail program statewide

213 Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
76 Certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:
228 Certified Small Businesses

CENTRAL VALLEY:
195 Certified Small Businesses

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:
212 Certified Small Businesses

OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA:
18 Certified Small Businesses