



Contents

- 1 *Small Southern California Business Provides Big Environmental Services*
- 4 *Bay Area Planner Has Big Plans for High-Speed Rail Stations*
- 6 *Preparing for High-Speed Rail's Future, Ramos CS Coordinates Utilities Relocation*
- 8 *Fresno Firm Finds Itself Immersed in High-Speed Rail*
- 9 *Sowing the Seeds of an Entrepreneurial Spirit*
- 10 *Galgiani Helps Drive to Finish High-Speed Rail*
- 11 *New Small Business Advocate Hits the Ground Running*
- 12 *BAC Member Walter Allen Creates Jobs and Diversity*
- 14 *Carpenter Builds Career While Building High-Speed Rail*
- 15 *They Work Hard For the Money*
- 16 *Construction Continues as High-Speed Rail Puts People to Work*
- 18 *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

Small Southern California Business Provides Big Environmental Services

By Micah Flores

Running a small business requires determination and passion.

So says Marie Campbell, president of **Sapphos Environmental, Inc.**, an environmental compliance firm based in Pasadena. She founded the certified Small Business and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (SB/DBE) in 1992 after more than a decade in the public and private sectors. "I thought it would be good to start a firm for people committed to advancing infrastructure in a manner that conserves the environment for current and future generations," Campbell said.

From the beginning, she wanted her firm's environmental documents to be "legally defensible and easily understood by anyone - from those with PhDs in biochemical engineering to blue collar non-English speakers."

"The most effective solutions ultimately reflect the needs and input of the affected parties," Campbell noted. "As a Hispanic

woman, taking care of people is a really important part of my cultural heritage. We want everyone at the end of the process to feel like they were heard and respected."

Campbell's two daughters interned at Sapphos while in college. Today, her eldest daughter serves as the chief financial officer

"I thought it would be good to start a firm for people committed to advancing infrastructure in a manner that conserves the environment for current and future generations."

Marie Campbell
President
Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

Investing in California Small Businesses

**SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 2
JULY 2018**

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The *Investing in California Small Businesses* newsletter is published quarterly by the Office of Communications of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. To view past newsletters visit: www.hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Small_Business/newsletter.html

of the Pasadena firm, which employs 35 full-time staff and approximately 10 contract employees.

As a subcontractor to HNTB Corporation, Sapphos has been paid more than \$1 million for environmental compliance work on Construction Package 4 (CP 4), from the Kings-Tulare County line to just north of Bakersfield.

HNTB houses three Sapphos staff members at their main construction office in Wasco, while Campbell rents a house in Bakersfield to support employees deployed to the project site. They provide an additional layer of project oversight for the Authority and the design-build contractor. Her team makes sure pre-construction activities, construction and associated environmental permits comply with federal, state, and local statutes, including the California Endangered Species Acts, State Fish and Game Code, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

Campbell pointed out, "It's not for me to present the solution. It's for me to help guide the stakeholders to own the solution. The best solutions are the ones the stakeholders feel they own."

Campbell credits her firm's role on the high-speed rail project with opening the door to other opportunities, including a recent contract she secured with Southern California Gas Company.

Looking back, Campbell said despite the support of family and friends, success hasn't been easy.

She received a bachelor's degree in Ecosystems and a master's degree in Geography and Geomorphology/Biogeography, both from UCLA. As a graduate student, she landed a student position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and eventually got on full-time as an Environmental Specialist. Campbell quickly rose through the ranks and became the Acting Chief of the Corp's Environmental Resources Branch.

"I loved my job at the Corps," Campbell said. But, she noted, the high cost of living in Los Angeles prompted her to take a job with one of the state's largest environmental consulting firms where she oversaw a team of environmental natural resource specialists preparing environmental documents required by state and federal laws. She



Sapphos Environmental, Inc. president and founder **Marie Campbell** (second from left) reviews Construction Package 4 plans with staff and consultants. Her team makes sure pre-construction activities, construction and associated environmental permits comply with federal, state and local statutes.

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 Enterprises (DBEs), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBs) and Micro-Businesses (MBs).

was also involved in regulatory permitting, stakeholder negotiations, and public workshops and hearings.

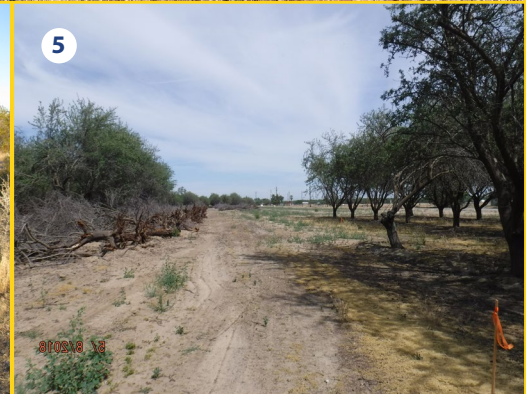
The work helped prepare her for the launch of Sapphos, but she still faced challenges such as a lack of information about business regulations including payroll taxes, mandatory deductions and business licenses.

Getting a line of credit was also a major obstacle. "It's hard for minorities and women to get credit for big purchases," she said. Subsequently, she leveraged the equity in her home to buy a commercial space in Pasadena. In 2005, she said she was the first female minority business owner in the Western U.S. to get a loan from a major bank to buy her company's current location.

Even with its perfect litigation track record, Campbell maintained it took her five to seven years to secure contracts with SoCal Gas, LA Metro and the Authority. Despite the tribulations, she pointed out that Sapphos has earned more than \$87 million over 25 years.

The firm also lends a hand to many philanthropic projects, including California Preservation, Habitat for Humanity, Friends of the Los Angeles River and Families Forward, an organization which helps homeless families in Orange County find stable housing.

As for the future, Campbell said, "We hope to continue to grow the firm over the next ten years," adding that she'd like to be viewed by employees and prospective employees as an "employer of choice" with an excellent reputation for quality, solutions, and service.



1. An employee of Sapphos Environmental conducts biological monitoring work. The company opened in 1992 and today the Pasadena-based company employs 35 full-time staff and approximately 10 contract employees.

2. Quite often, **Marie Campbell** (right), founder of Sapphos Environmental, gets out of the office to handle environmental compliance work with **Lucy Lin**, Environmental Oversight Manager.

3. Sapphos Environmental is supportive of many philanthropic projects in the community. During an Earth Day event, the firm's staff, family, and friends joined members of the Los Angeles chapter of the Association of Environmental Professionals in Rio de Los Angeles Park where they removed non-native grasses and planted native plants, including oak and elderberry.

4. Sapphos Environmental staff members must be knowledgeable about numerous environmental statutes, including the California Endangered Species Acts, State Fish and Game Code, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

5. Cleared and grubbed area off Merced Avenue near Wasco, future CP-4 alignment. As a subcontractor to HNTB Corporation, Sapphos has been paid more than \$1 million for environmental compliance work on CP-4, from the Kern-Tulare County line to just north of Bakersfield.

Bay Area Planner Has Big Plans for High-Speed Rail Stations

By Ricci Graham

Bruce Fukuji is a man of many disciplines. The principal owner of Albany-based **Urban Design Innovations**, Fukuji has played an essential role in the development of numerous projects throughout California and the nation as an architect, city planner and urban designer.

Fukuji has consulted on a plethora of projects, including the \$5 billion expansion of Stanford University Medical Center, Grand Boulevard Initiative street design for El Camino Real in Sunnyvale and the Supportive Housing Program for homeless families at the former Alameda Naval Air Station. Fukuji also served on the Palo Alto Urban Design Committee, overseeing development of the community-based downtown plan.

It is that confluence of 30 years of experience and expertise that has made Fukuji a crucial resource for the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) as it engages in long-term planning for its train stations.

"I've had the unique opportunity to plan and design several projects that have received national recognition," Fukuji said "Planning for the nation's first high-speed rail system is one of the most significant endeavors that I've been associated with."

A subcontractor for WSP - the Authority's Rail Delivery Partner - Fukuji is the agency's Northern California Planning Manager, overseeing preliminary station design for environmental clearance. He uses knowledge of transit-oriented development concepts that were refined over the past few decades to lay the groundwork for areas around high-speed rail stations.

Fukuji's planning philosophy can be traced back to his work with the U.S. Congress for New Urbanism in the 1990s. It was a time when planners, urban designers, architects and engineers initiated sustainable building practices in urban centers as an alternative approach to planning, formally eschewing the traditional approach to suburban auto-dominated, single-land-use environments.

Planning by New Urbanists includes affordable housing, mixed-use and transit-oriented development and streets that encourage walking.

"This has transformed the way cities are planned throughout the U.S.," Fukuji said. "I've been on the forefront of this effort."

The New Urbanist philosophy fits perfectly into the development of high-speed rail stations that transform cities by serving as transportation hubs and major catalysts for economic growth and transit-oriented development.

 Urban Design Innovations



Urban Design Innovations owner **Bruce Fukuji** brings 30 years of experience and expertise to the high-speed rail project. As the Northern California Planning Manager, he's working with communities to determine what kind of development they'd like to see around high-speed rail stations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

To achieve that vision, Fukuji has worked with communities and the Authority's transit and local agency partners. He helps guide them in creating a vision for stations and securing funding for planning.

"Around the world, high-speed rail stations are focal points of regional economic activity, attracting public and private investment and stimulating the regeneration of station areas," Fukuji said. "Our station area grants fund local agencies planning for the economic success of station areas."

"We wanted to make sure site plans anticipate the rapidly evolving technologies of station access, [walking and biking], Uber and Lyft and in the next few years, driverless vehicles. Urban design [can] plan station areas and foster sustainable development."

In Northern California, Fukuji is focusing on stations planned in the San Francisco Bay Area. They include stations at 4th and King Streets in San Francisco, Millbrae Station with a connection to the San Francisco International Airport, Diridon Station in San Jose, and a station in Gilroy.

How high-speed rail alignment alternatives thread through cities and regions also presents unique challenges to non-station communities throughout the state. Fukuji said the Authority is currently engaged in a robust 'Connecting Communities Strategy' outreach effort to address community concerns, values and issues and ensure that those strategies are maintained during construction.

"Stakeholder interplay is important," Fukuji said. "We are linking locally desired projects with potential cap-and-trade funding. We are setting up the opportunity for local communities, and disadvantaged communities in particular, to take the initiative and benefit from collaborating with us and our partner agencies."

"We support local communities to deliver cap-and-trade investment to their

“What I like about California high-speed rail is the commitment to a statewide vision. The message is that, collectively, we can do something far greater that can advance all of our diverse interests if we come together. To have a program that’s trying to do that at this scale is unprecedented.”

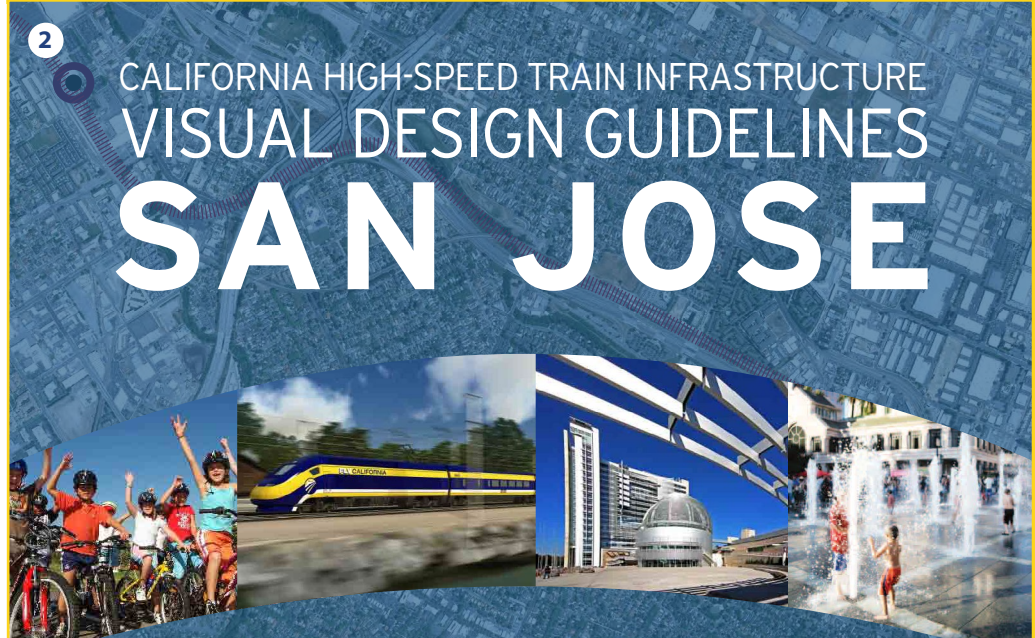
Bruce Fukuji
Principal Owner
Urban Design Innovations

communities. It benefits all Californians to reduce our carbon footprint and live in healthier, more sustainable communities.”

From a professional standpoint, the high-speed rail program has presented Fukuji with the rare opportunity to work on a project that will be a bellwether as other states begin to embrace the concept of high-speed rail.

“I’d like to see our nation’s first high-speed rail system meet the expectations bar for what we’re capable of doing,” Fukuji said. “When the governor made the decision to do this, it was a bold initiative.”

“California has a proven history of leadership. What I like about California high-speed rail is the commitment to a statewide vision. The message is that, collectively, we can do something far greater that can advance all of our diverse interests if we come together. To have a program that’s trying to do that at this scale is unprecedented.”



1. Urban Design Innovations owner **Bruce Fukuji** makes a presentation at a recent community meeting for the San Francisco to San Jose project section. As an urban planner and designer, he uses knowledge of transit-oriented development concepts that were refined over the past few decades to lay the groundwork for areas around the proposed Millbrae high-speed rail station.

2. When **Bruce Fukuji** shows up at community meetings, he may have a 150-page book in full color describing transit-oriented development around high-speed rail stations. He gleans information from elected officials, residents, businesses and other stakeholders about what they want. Before plans are finalized, the guidelines may be refined numerous times.

3. The work of planner **Bruce Fukuji** can be seen all over the United States. His planning designs transformed Tyson’s Corners, near Washington D.C., from auto-oriented office parks and shopping malls to a walkable, transit-oriented central business district. The project, featured in *Time* magazine and the *Washington Post*, received the American Planning Association’s national planning award.

4. This depiction of the charming village of Bay Meadows, a 75-acre mixed-use, transit-oriented development in San Mateo, California is an example of the work of urban planner and designer **Bruce Fukuji**.

Preparing for High-Speed Rail's Future, Ramos CS Coordinates Utilities Relocation

By Micah Flores

Gas, electrical, water, sewer and even petroleum lines — no matter the system, these utilities are no match for Los Angeles-area small business **Ramos Consulting Services, Inc.**

Armando Ramos, the Pasadena business' founder and CEO, is proud of his team's ability to coordinate multiple third-party utility relocation strategies, identifying challenges and overcoming barriers to building America's first truly high-speed rail project.

A California licensed Professional Engineer with a pair of engineering degrees from UC Berkeley and a business degree from Pepperdine University, Ramos worked in management for a large engineering firm earlier in his career before striking out on his own. From the beginning, Ramos wanted to solve what he saw as inefficiencies in engineering.

"The ability to progress the field through technology and improved processes was something apparent to me," recalled Ramos. He was also on several leadership councils, which served as platforms affording him the opportunity to see how large corporations operate globally. "I don't think I slept for the first few years. During the day, I would hold all my meetings, and at night I worked and did intensive research."

But to Ramos, whose multi-service infrastructure consulting business specializes in public infrastructure projects, it's the local touch that he believes matters most. He hired his first employee in 2011 and leased a commercial space on Lake Avenue in Pasadena soon thereafter. Currently, Ramos has 29 individuals on the payroll.

"We live in the communities where these

projects are being designed and constructed," he said. Currently, his team is engaged in two utility relocation programs, both with project and construction management primes overseeing the relocation of existing complex utilities systems in the Central Valley. "One of the core values of Ramos is that staff is representative of the communities we work in. We continue to work with the local engineering community on local hires."

"We're part of an integrated team," Ramos explained, describing his team's role of meticulously tracking and coordinating the details required to relocate the utilities and myriad systems owned by an array of impacted third-party entities. "Our staff is part of the third-party oversight and utility group."

When utilities — like various data and cable lines, including irrigation, water, or sewer lines — must be relocated to make room for construction, the Ramos staff jumps into action. They work with the team in removing obstacles to the relocation process on behalf of the project. While two of his staff works on Construction Package 2-3 (CP 2-3) with the project and construction manager, the



Ramos CS founder and CEO **Armando Ramos** says he's honored to be a part of the nation's first high-speed rail system.



"This is the beginning of bringing the infrastructure technology to North America and my team and I are committed and prepared for this monumental transformation,"

Armando Ramos
Founder and CEO
Ramos Consulting Services, Inc.

other team member works on Construction Package 4 with that package's project and construction manager.

"One of the biggest impacted entities is the electrical systems," Ramos said, citing PG&E, a large utility provider with complex protocols and "over \$100 million scope of work." The team is coordinating with PG&E in order to implement the design necessary for the project to move forward.

According to Ramos, there are more than 30 entities with various utilities systems on CP 2-3 alone. This includes cities and counties like Fresno, Corcoran, and Tulare, and other major utility companies like SoCal Gas, Edison, Sprint and Verizon, as well as various water and irrigation districts. The list goes on.

"Utilities have to be identified, mapped, and analyzed to support the rail design" he said, explaining his team's emphasis on not only engineering but the "soft skills" he believes are required to successfully coordinate logistics with the utilities



1



2



3



4

under local, state and federal regulatory requirements. “We identify impact and track progression.”

Ramos is a first-generation Mexican American and the first in his family to go to college. “I’m honored to be part of this nation’s first high-speed rail system,” said Ramos. He pointed to the fact that the project will connect the state’s megaregions and enhance mobility for millions of Californians for generations to come. He believes it will ultimately benefit working families who strive to strengthen and improve the economy.

In addition to the many notable transportation third-party contracts that

Ramos’ firm has worked on (including LA Metro’s rail system — Purple Line, Regional, Foothill, and Exposition), Ramos said his firm was recently selected as a joint venture partner on two contracts, one of which includes transit systems engineering support for LA Metro.

As for a continued future with high-speed rail beyond current contract obligations, Ramos isn’t ruling anything out.

“This is the beginning of bringing the infrastructure technology to North America and my team and I are committed and prepared for this monumental transformation,” he said.

1. Current construction is underway on Construction Package 4, Garces Hwy in Kern County. When utilities, such as data, cable, irrigation, water, or sewer lines, are relocated to make room for construction, the Ramos CS staff jumps into action. They work with the team to remove obstacles to the relocation process.

2. California Rail Builders crews put in steel rebar foundation cages for an overcrossing while Ramos CS workers watch and make sure the work meets strict strength and safety standards.

3. Ramos CS Project Estimator **Joe Cartagena** reviews relocation plans for third parties in Wasco.

4. Third-Party Office Engineer **Vilay Lee** (left) and Engineer and Utility Coordinator **Esteban Nunez** (right) review PG&E transmission relocation plans for high-speed rail.

5. The complex system of utility lines for LA Metro’s Purple Line Extension in Los Angeles demonstrates how teams work around existing utilities during construction and planning. This is one of the many notable transportation third-party contracts that Ramos’ firm has worked on.



5

Fresno Firm Finds Itself Immersed in High-Speed Rail

By Cody Dixon/Karen Massie

When you think of high-speed rail, there are few more passionate than Ed Dunkel, Jr, owner of **Precision Civil Engineering (PCE)**. Numerous times, the Authority has heard from the fifth-generation Fresno native and his staff at board meetings.

"This is an exciting project to be a part of, and I am grateful to be involved in something so transformative," said PCE President and CEO Ed Dunkel. "High-speed rail will be great for the State of California, and certainly a much-needed economic boost for the City of Fresno."

The high-speed rail project has also given PCE, a Fresno-based certified Microbusiness (MB), a financial shot in the arm. According to Dunkel, it's added more than \$3 million to the company's bottom line.

During the last six years, PCE employees have kept a watchful eye on construction designs in California's Central Valley. They are subcontractors for Wong-Harris, the company handling program and construction management (PCM) for Construction Package 1 and Arcadis, the PCM for Construction Package 2-3. For both contracts, Dunkel and his team pore over infrastructure designs drawn by design-build teams, making sure they meet the highest standards for strength, safety and longevity.

In 2013, PCE was selected as a regional consultant for the Merced to Sacramento section of high-speed rail. Workers conducted preliminary engineering and environmental analysis of various route options to determine what impact they would have on land, bodies of water, people, plants, animals and the air. "We held public outreach meetings and talked to residents, elected officials

and agencies all along the alignments. We created a huge stakeholder database that we gave to the Authority," Dunkel explained. "Our corridor study also focused on Caltrain, Caltrans and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE). We looked at how high-speed rail could hook up with existing rail and provide alternative routes to Stockton, Sacramento and other cities."

Before the federal government greenlighted construction in the Central Valley, PCE had a lot of experience with high-speed rail. The City of Fresno hired PCE to study the impacts of high-speed rail going in and out of Fresno. Dunkel and his team provided comments for the draft environmental impact report. Under another contract, they evaluated the impact development around a proposed Fresno high-speed rail station would have on traffic. PCE also worked as part of the Fresno Works Team to study environmental impacts of a site proposed for a heavy maintenance facility.



To keep up with all the work, PCE, which launched in 2002, hired an extra 15 people. Today there are 50 employees on staff. "This project has been a fantastic opportunity for my company," Dunkel declared. "Working on the project gave us a chance to gain experience, expand our services and broaden our knowledge base and give some people much needed work."

"Working on the project gave us a chance to gain experience, expand our services and broaden our knowledge base and give some people much needed work."

Edward Dunkel, Jr.
Owner
Precision Civil Engineering



1. Precision Civil Engineering (PCE) has worked on the high-speed rail project since 2009. PCE owner **Ed Dunkel** (center) and his team discuss program and construction management for two construction packages in the Central Valley. The firm makes sure when construction is completed, the system's infrastructure will meet the highest standards for strength, safety and longevity.

2. **Edward Dunkel, Jr.** opened Precision Civil Engineering in 2002. Today, nearly 50 people work there. Dunkel points to high-speed rail as the major reason for growth. At one point, he hired 15 extra people just to handle the work on high-speed rail.

Sowing the Seeds of an Entrepreneurial Spirit

By Ricci Graham

Cesar Montes de Oca grew up in a family that had a collective entrepreneurial spirit and was always determined to chart an independent pathway that would lead them to owning their own businesses.

Montes de Oca admired his family's ability to take ownership of their lives and was determined to carry on that legacy. After working as a consultant for various engineering firms and public agencies, he decided it was time to lay the foundation for his own business.

In 2013, Montes de Oca founded **UNICO Engineering (UNICO)**, a Folsom-based firm that provides construction management, land survey, program management and systems integration services. A year later, he and his business partner, Carl Sloan – who also worked for several consulting engineering firms and who had previously owned his own firm – formally incorporated UNICO.

Today, UNICO – a certified Small Business and a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (SB/DBE) – is under contract with California Rail Builders (CRB), providing verification and validation, safety and security and interface management on Construction Package 4.

A Hispanic-owned firm, UNICO and its team

“The contract exposed the team to new challenges and has helped us grow as a company. The future is bright for us.”

Cesar Montes de Oca
Owner
UNICO Engineering

are responsible for reviewing design and construction submittals, ensuring they meet the California High-Speed Rail Authority's requirements contained within the Design Criteria Manual.

“UNICO achieves the design review using a process known as verification and validation (V&V). We have close interaction with CRB's civil design, utility design, quality, and construction teams to ensure they address the applicable contract requirements,” Montes de Oca said. “Without undertaking V&V, there would be no evidence that the designs and subsequent construction meet the requirements, and there would be a risk that the future rail systems wouldn't



be compatible, leading to delays or worse, redoing some work. We've found V&V and the collaborative approach has really helped the design team focus on the applicable requirements and produce better quality designs.”

As Montes de Oca and Sloan work to grow their firm, they face a familiar challenge—cultivating a team that could function as a collective unit.

“The biggest challenges with running your own company is recruiting and retaining the right mix of employees,” Montes de Oca said. “In a small company, the employees need to be a cohesive unit. Everyone needs to be part of the team and willing to jump in and help when needed.”

“In addition to making sure that everyone fits within UNICO's culture, there are many rules, regulations and decisions that as a business owner you make that impact employees. Benefit packages, payroll companies, prevailing wage law intricacies, paperwork and regulations -- these things are not taught in engineering school but are integral in running an engineering firm.”

UNICO presently has more than 30 employees. Three additional employees were hired after securing the contract on the high-speed rail project. Montes de Oca said he is optimistic that having the high-speed rail project on his firm's portfolio will lead to future growth.

“UNICO is appreciative of the opportunity to participate on a landmark project,” he said. “The contract exposed the team to new challenges and has helped us grow as a company. The future is bright for us.”



1. UNICO Engineering owner **Cesar Montes de Oca** and Office Engineer **Marien Sinclair** review designs for California Rail Builders, the design-build contractor for Construction Package 4. Using a design review process known as verification and validation (V&V), UNICO makes sure designs meet high standards and will interface with other parts of the high-speed rail system, which are being built by other contractors.

2. Following in his family's footsteps to take ownership of their lives, **Cesar Montes de Oca** founded Folsom-based UNICO Engineering in 2013.

Galgiani Helps Drive to Finish High-Speed Rail

By Karen Massie

Senator Cathleen Galgiani (D) - Stockton

doesn't mind letting anyone know how she feels about high-speed rail. "High-speed rail will take tens of thousands of cars off the roads, reducing congestion and air pollution," she declared. "It will also result in a much smaller footprint than the 12 lanes that would be needed to accommodate future traffic on freeways, especially through the Central Valley."

Her support for high-speed rail goes back several years. In 2008, Galgiani was in the Assembly when the high-speed rail bond measure was delayed for a couple of election cycles. She sponsored **Assembly Bill (AB) 3034**, which became the language for Proposition 1A, the High-Speed Rail Act.

Getting AB 3034 through the legislature wasn't easy. The state budget was nearly two months overdue and the ballot deadline was looming. Not only that, Governor Schwarzenegger had vowed not to sign any bills until the budget was approved. But Galgiani forged ahead. "There were many challenging negotiations with competing interests," she recalled. She garnered bipartisan support and got the bill through

the legislature with the two-thirds majority that was needed. She also convinced the Governor to sign the bill just in time to put it on the ballot as Prop 1A.

That November, California voters said yes to Prop 1A for \$9.95 billion. "It included the Pacheco Pass route to San Jose and the Bay Area which eliminated a number of environmental concerns with the Altamont Pass corridor," Galgiani explained. "It established that the operation of the high-speed system would not be subsidized by taxpayers. It also promoted connectivity with other rail systems in the state."

Fast forward to October 2017 when Governor Brown signed **Senate Bill (SB) 605**, a measure authored by Galgiani that gives high-speed rail another boost. The new law raises the annual income limit for small businesses bidding on public infrastructure

projects from \$10 million to \$36 million. The firm can have up to 200 employees. "The bill brings that [income] threshold up to a more current standard and allows many more growing small businesses to bid on big projects like high-speed rail," Galgiani explained. "It also prevents penalizing small businesses that grow and benefit from the program from becoming disqualified for success."

The change goes into effect next year and brings California law in line with federal contracting limits. It also increases revenue limits for micro-businesses from \$2.5 million to \$5 million.

Meanwhile, Galgiani said she'll continue doing what she can to move the high-speed rail project forward. "It will be a great benefit to the Central Valley by connecting the Valley to the large urban centers and the greater California economy."

"It will be a great benefit to the Central Valley by connecting the Valley to the large urban centers and the greater California economy."

Cathleen Galgiani
State Senator
D-Stockton



1. State Sen. Galgiani, D-Stockton spoke to students at a Pre-Apprenticeship Training graduation ceremony in Modesto. In 2008, she sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 3034, which became the language for Proposition 1A, the High-Speed Rail Act.

2. State Sen. Galgiani (6th from right) joined Central Valley Regional Director **Diana Gomez** (2nd from right) in encouraging Pre-Apprenticeship Training graduates to use their newly acquired skills to help build high-speed rail. The students were trained in various construction trades, including concrete, electrical, plumbing, painting, rigging and hoisting, forklifts and construction math.



New Small Business Advocate Hits the Ground Running

By Karen Massie

For nearly two decades, Catrina Blair has crisscrossed California encouraging, training and talking to small businesses about the rewards of doing business with the state. She's won awards for her work as the Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Advocate for the procurement arm of the Department of General Services (DGS).

In June, Blair brought her wealth of experience to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, where she was tapped as the new **Small Business** Advocate. She said, "The high-speed rail project is history in the making. To be a part of a department that has such a huge role in this project will be an exciting challenge for my career."

At DGS, Blair led a team that established a resource website for state departments to reference when they were looking to meet and increase their mandated Small Business (SB) and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) participation goals on contracts.

As a manager, she oversaw staff, managed a \$300,000 budget, organized and conducted outreach events and created databases and reports. Blair worked closely with DGS executive management to get it all done.

Currently, there are 437 small businesses working on the high-speed rail project. More small business will have to join the program to meet the aggressive 30 percent small business goal. Blair knows getting one state contract can make a huge difference for some firms.

"Because I have been in the advocate role for the last 11 years, I have seen businesses grow from being small to large and from subcontractors to prime contractors," Blair said. "Small businesses play a large role in sustaining California's economy because they employ half of the people working in the entire state. I am proud to be a part of a business' trajectory of success, and I will continue to propel businesses forward with contract opportunities on high-speed rail."

"Small businesses play a large role in sustaining California's economy because they employ half of the people working in the entire state."

Catrina Blair
Small Business Advocate



1. Last fall, **Catrina Blair** (center) and the California Department of General Services (DGS) Outreach Team attended the California Black Chamber of Commerce Ron Brown Summit in Oakland.
2. Prior to becoming the Authority's Small Business Advocate, **Catrina Blair** traveled throughout California touting the benefits of procuring state contracts to small business owners.
3. While Small Business Advocate **Catrina Blair** was at DGS she managed staff, a \$300,000 budget and organized numerous outreach events.
4. **Catrina Blair** (standing, third from right) and the DGS Procurement Outreach Team won the 2015 Richard G. Polanco Diversity Outreach Award for increasing participation of minority, women and disabled veteran owned businesses in state contracting.

BAC Member Walter Allen Creates Jobs and Diversity

By Karen Massie

Most college students wait until they graduate before opening a new business. But Walter Allen was in graduate school when he decided to launch his company. "I was at [University of California] Berkeley getting my master's degree and quite frankly, I needed some cash," Allen laughed. It was 1994 and **Acumen Building Enterprise** was born.

Before Allen, a Navy veteran, received a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering and Project Controls, he was consulting for accounting giant Coopers and Lybrand. "I came to Sacramento about five days a month," Allen explained. "I was dealing with JP Morgan and other banks who were financing large energy users - gas turbine powerplants

for SMUD (Sacramento Municipal Utility District), Carson Ice-Gen Project, Campbell Soup and Proctor & Gamble. I checked on their invoices, progress and work quality."

Fast forward 25 years and Acumen is now certified as a Small Business in California. The company focuses on systems engineering, infrastructure and technology and has worked for major transit systems in Washington, D.C., New York, San Diego, Los Angeles, Hawaii, Portland and San Francisco. Acumen's largest client is BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), which uses a bill-to-bill changer and a contactless smart card reader developed by Allen's firm. The smart card system reads and writes to integrated circuits found in smart cards used by passengers to



board trains and busses.

No longer a one-man operation, Allen employs 45 people. He said, "Now, I have managers doing finance and engineering. I have more support and the issues are more complex, but I understand challenges small businesses face."

It's also why Allen garnered a spot on the Authority's **Business Advisory Council (BAC)**



"Every quarter, I make a concerted effort to bring one recent college grad to Acumen. They also receive exposure to the transit industry, major infrastructure development trends, safety training and they undergo a background check. It takes about three to six months to give them the basics to launch a career and be in demand."

Walter Allen
President/CEO
Acumen Building Enterprise

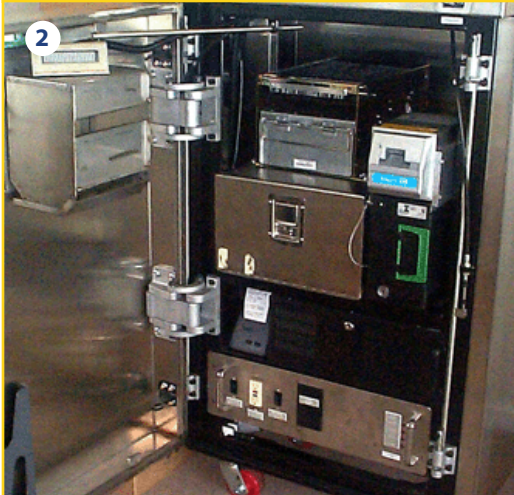
Acumen Building Enterprise founder **Walter Allen** (left) and senior systems engineer **Doug Van Blaricom** review the 1st shipment of AcuFare 135tm units designed for BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), the public transportation system that services the San Francisco Bay Area.

representing the **Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO)**. “The organization looks out for the interests of African-Americans and other minorities,” Allen explained. “We want to make sure there is a fair distribution of business opportunities for everyone.”

COMTO was founded in 1971 to help minority professionals in the transportation industry. The group provides networking, training, education and professional development. According to Allen, minority professionals flocked to the transportation industry for nearly 40 years, but their numbers are declining. “Ten years ago, we had at least 16 African-Americans who were general managers of large transit systems. Now, maybe we have four,” he said. “People are retiring and no minorities are replacing them. We’ve got to do some retraining and get young people interested in the industry.”

He said COMTO chapters around the nation offer scholarships to deserving students. He’s doing his part to create jobs and a diverse workforce. “Every quarter, I make a concerted effort to bring one recent college grad to Acumen,” he explained. “At first, they help out and do research for me or tasks assigned by other managers. Then, they’re assigned to a project. They also receive exposure to the transit industry, major infrastructure development trends, safety training and they undergo a background check. It takes about three to six months to give them the basics to launch a career and be in demand.”

Most of the students are from University of California campuses at Davis, San Francisco and Berkeley. Allen hopes some of them will stay with him. “Ultimately, I want my company to continue. As I move on to the next phase of my life, I’m looking for my successor,” he declared.



1. Acumen President/CEO **Walter Allen** (right) and one of his staff members discuss a transportation project. The company focuses on systems engineering, infrastructure and technology and has worked for major transit systems in Washington, D.C., New York, San Diego, Los Angeles, Hawaii, Portland and San Francisco. Acumen's largest client is the San Francisco Area BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit).

2. Acumen developed a bill-to-bill changer that is installed in all BART stations in the San Francisco Area. The machines quickly exchange \$10 and \$20 bills for \$5 bills. Customers can use the change in BART ticketing machines.

3. AcuFare 135th units were designed by Acumen for BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit). The units allow customer service agents to read information and transit transaction history for passengers from contactless fare cards or devices. If the cards or devices are malfunctioning the agent can see the information and come up with a remedy.

4. Allen sits on the Authority's Business Advisory Council (BAC) representing the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO). The organization was founded in 1971 to help minority professionals in the transportation industry. Allen said, “We want to make sure there is a fair distribution of business opportunities for everyone.”

Carpenter Builds Career While Building High-Speed Rail

By Dan Galvin

Over the roughly two and a half years the California high-speed rail project has been under construction, more than **2,000 workers** have been employed in various capacities, from equipment operators, concrete and ironworkers to carpenters, electricians and laborers. Some crews have moved on to other jobs in the Central Valley, but carpenter **Jason Clark** is one worker who is still around from the early days of construction.

Currently working on the **San Joaquin River Viaduct**, Clark was also involved in the construction of the Tuolumne Street Bridge in downtown Fresno, as well as the Cottonwood Creek Bridge in Madera County.

"At Tuolumne, we started right after they completed the demolition of the old bridge," Clark said. "We prefabbed all the footing panels and forms. We were the first ones in there once they finished the demo."

Clark follows in the footsteps of his father and older brother, who also worked on high-speed rail. His father, Brad, still works on the project as a carpenter at the Cedar Viaduct on the south side of Fresno. "My dad has been in construction for 25 years and when I turned 18, I went into it, too. I started right out of high school," Clark said.

"I love my job. It's my first job as a foreman, and it's a lot of responsibility. There are a lot of moving parts, but we're getting it done."

Jason Clark
Carpenter Foreman
San Joaquin River Viaduct

Now at 31 years old, Clark is a carpenter foreman on the San Joaquin River Viaduct in charge of a crew of 12. He's proud of the fact that he's been involved in setting every concrete girder on the project. That includes all the girders on the Tuolumne Street Bridge, the Cottonwood Creek Bridge and all 198 girders that make up the pergola for the San Joaquin River Viaduct.

"At the San Joaquin River, we're making very good progress," Clark said. "We finished setting the girders and now are pouring concrete for the upper edge beam that locks the girders into place. The decking and foundation that the track will be installed on are what we're working on next."

Clark has also seen action at several other high-speed rail construction sites, including the Avenue 12 interchange at State Route 99—the State Route 99 extension through Kingsburg, Selma and Visalia—and the State Route 180 extension from Clovis Avenue.

He points out that as a design-build project, work on high-speed rail is handled differently than many other construction projects.

"There isn't one set of plans that shows how everything is going to be done," Clark explained. "From an engineering stand point, they'll say 'this is what we want', then I have to figure out what I need to do it. We have to figure out how we can turn a set of plans into a reality."

Clark is excited to be a part of a job as big as the California high-speed rail project. He said it's challenging, but well worth it. "I love my job. It's my first job as a foreman, and it's a lot of responsibility," he said. "There are a lot of moving parts, but we're getting it done."

Carpenter foreman **Jason Clark** checks a set of plans for the San Joaquin River Viaduct where he oversees a crew constructing the pergola structure over the existing railroad line. Clark has worked on the high-speed rail project since heavy construction began in 2016. He's also been involved in the construction of the Tuolumne Street Bridge in downtown Fresno, the Avenue 12 interchange at State Route 99, the State Route 180 extension from Clovis Avenue and the Cottonwood Creek Bridge in Madera County.



They Work Hard For the Money

By Karen Massie

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women make up only nine percent of the U.S. construction workforce. That percentage may seem small, but the latest numbers from 2010 show there are still 800,000 women in construction, whether it's in managerial, professional, administrative or production jobs.

In honor of Women in Construction Week in March, the Authority talked with some women who are among the most visible employees on the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley.

Jonelle Murphy isn't deterred by the fact that she won't encounter very many women doing heavy construction work. She's assigned to the East Floral Avenue overcrossing, which will carry traffic over high-speed rail and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) tracks about 15 miles south of Fresno.

"I think people are starting to realize that we can do it just as well as any man can or better," Murphy laughed.

As a grade setter, she looks at designs and may use a hammer, laser level and other survey equipment to plot where stakes should be stuck in the ground, so work crews know where to place mounds of dirt for embankments and structures.

"During the layoff, I went to the [union hall], signed up and they sent me out here. I thought it was a great step."

Verleah Jones
Ironworker
Avenue 12 Grade Separation

Grade setter **Jonelle Murphy** uses a laser level and other survey equipment to plot where stakes should be stuck in the ground, so work crews know where to place mounds of dirt for high-speed rail embankments and structures. She's working at the East Floral Avenue overcrossing, about 15 miles south of Fresno.



"I think people are starting to realize that we can do it just as well as any man can or better."

"The money is good. I'm outdoors. Figured I'd give it a shot and I love it."

Jonelle Murphy
Grade Setter
East Floral Avenue overcrossing

Murphy doesn't mind working in the field. "The money is good. I'm outdoors," she said. "Figured I'd give it a shot and I love it."

Meanwhile, ironworker **Verleah Jones** is toiling away on the Avenue 12 grade separation outside Madera, another overcrossing that will pass above high-speed rail and BNSF trains. We caught up with her while she was climbing up and down steel rebar cages, which will hold together the overcrossing's foundation pillars.

Jones admitted being in construction

isn't always easy because the work can be seasonal and some projects are short-term. "I started out in Texas and [work] slowed down there a little bit," Jones explained. She found work with L.A. Steel, and when that project ended she went hunting for another job.

"During the layoff, I went to the [union hall], signed up and they sent me out here," she said. She's happy because her job brought her back to Fresno where she grew up. "I thought it was a great step."



Ironworker **Verleah Jones** works on steel rebar cages that will be inside foundation pillars of the Avenue 12 grade separation outside Madera. After being laid off from construction jobs in Texas and Southern California, Jones came to work on high-speed rail. She's happy to be working in Fresno where she grew up.

Construction Continues as High-Speed Rail Puts People to Work

By Karen Massie

The California High-Speed Rail Authority was joined by workers representing multiple union halls for a major milestone in June. More than 2,000 construction jobs have been created since crews started building the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley. The State Building and Construction Trades Council, the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board and other groups played an important role in the celebration because they have helped train and hire the skilled workforce that's constructing the high-speed rail system.

Fresno resident **Foster Ellis**, 28, a traffic control technician for Associated Traffic Safety, was dispatched as the 2,000th worker. "I work everywhere from Madera to Fresno or wherever they send me. I'm never in one spot," said Ellis, who has also been with the

Labors Union Local 294 for seven years.

Since the start of construction in 2013, men and women from across the state have been dispatched to relocate utilities, abate and demolish structures, drill columns 80 feet into the ground and place girders on mega structures near the San Joaquin River.

For many, the opportunity to work on high-speed rail has been life-changing. Apprentice ironworker **Desrae Ruiz** and her husband work on the project. She used to have a retail job that didn't provide enough for the couple and their daughter. Now they're able to reach goals they weren't sure would be possible.

"It's helping me get our house for the first time, helping me finish paying off my truck and we're working on getting me back to school," said Ruiz.

The workers represent 21 union halls and all have the same goal of building the first high-speed rail system in the nation.

Central Valley Construction Update

Twenty-one high-speed rail construction sites are buzzing with activity in the Central Valley. In March, the first heavy construction started in **Construction Package 4 (CP 4)**. The design-build team of California Rail Builders is in charge of work on CP 4 which stretches 22 miles from the Kern-Tulare County line and Poplar Avenue just north of Bakersfield.

Crews began drilling shafts 80-feet into the ground for the foundation of a bridge designed to carry trains over Garces Highway near Scofield Avenue, in Kern County. Rebar cages are also being lowered into the shafts and covered with concrete. When the structure is complete it will be approximately 102 feet in length and 52 feet wide, with abutments at each end of the structure, and have vertical clearance of just over 15 feet. Garces Highway will remain at-grade and Scofield Avenue will be realigned so that it's parallel to the high-speed rail alignment.

Small Business Outreach

As construction continues in the Central Valley, we'll need more small businesses to hop aboard the project. To let small business



1. Apprentice Ironworker **Desrae Ruiz** and her husband are among more than 2000 people working on high-speed rail construction in the Central Valley. Ruiz said the money has been life-changing for them and their daughter. They're making enough money to buy their first house and pay off a truck loan. She's also contemplating going back to school.

2. Laborer **Foster Ellis** of Fresno is the 2000th worker to be dispatched by a union hall to work on the high-speed rail project. He landed a job with Associated Traffic Safety as a traffic control technician. The 28-year-old has been with the Labors Union Local 294 for seven years. He said, "I'm really excited to see this project get done; I think it will make Fresno grow a lot."

owners know how they can join the project, the Authority's small business team hosted a free "Meet the Primes" event on June 28 in Visalia, CA.

Attendees met our prime design-build contractors face-to-face and learned about a wide range of upcoming opportunities to bid on contracts for high-speed rail work. They also spoke to other state, federal and local agencies, as well as networked with each other.

Small Business Numbers

Like a train moving down the track picking up passengers, the number of small businesses participating in the High-Speed Rail Program continues to grow. At last count, there were 437 Small Businesses (SB) and Microbusinesses (MB) working on the project statewide, including 142 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and 52 Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE).



Small business owners line up to talk to **Bjorn Nilsen**, the small business contact for design-builder Dragados Flatiron, at a recent Meet the Primes workshop in Visalia. Nilsen told listeners about upcoming contracts on Construction Package 2-3. At the height of construction, Nilsen said trucks will be needed 24 hours a day to complete construction on that portion of the high-speed rail project.



Interested in doing business with High-Speed Rail?

www.ConnectHSR.com



SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION AS OF MARCH 21, 2018

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

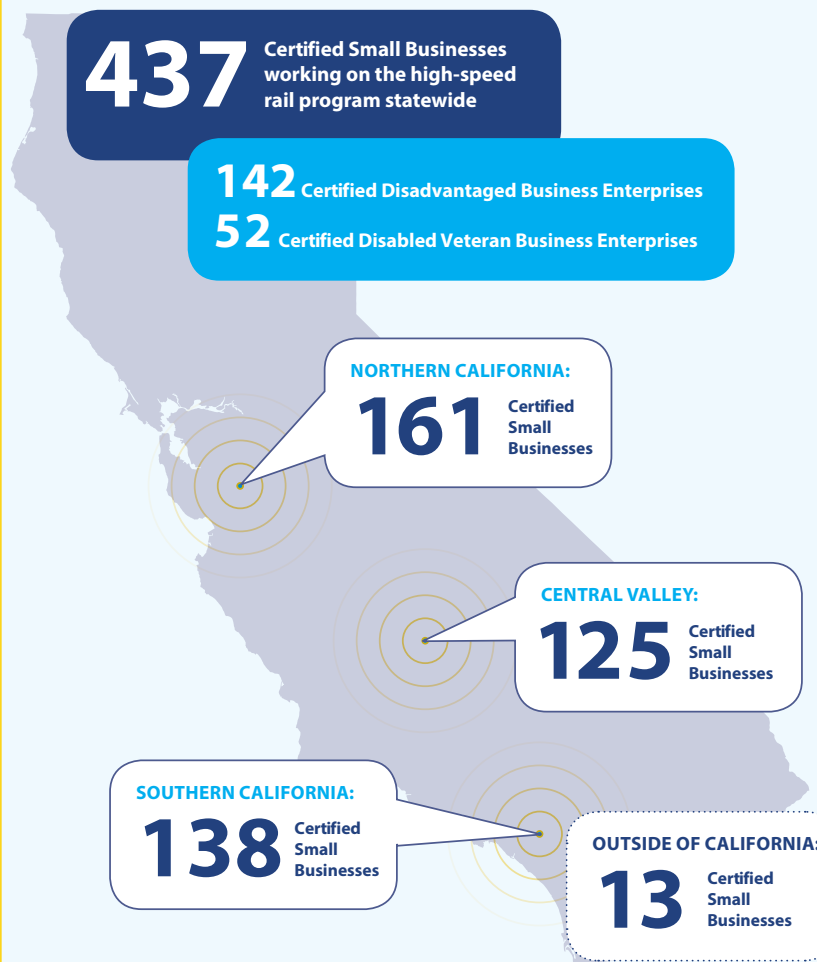
142 Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
52 Certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:
161 Certified Small Businesses

CENTRAL VALLEY:
125 Certified Small Businesses

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:
138 Certified Small Businesses

OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA:
13 Certified Small Businesses



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Meeting dates, times and locations are subject to change.

EVENTS	DATE	TIME	ADDRESS
California Construction Expo (CalCon)	July 19-20, 2018	Various	Anaheim Convention Center 800 W Katella Ave, Anaheim, CA 92802
Business Advisory Council	August 7, 2018	1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	California Department Of Health Care Services East End Complex 1500 Capitol Avenue Sacramento, CA 958
Authority Board of Directors Meeting	August 21, 2018	TBD	TBD TBD
California Black Chamber of Commerce	August 23-25, 2018	Various	Hilton Irvine Orange County Airport 18800 MacArthur Blvd Irvine, CA 92612
Authority Board of Directors Meeting	September 13, 2018	TBD	TBD TBD
Business Advisory Council	October 11, 2018	TBD	Rabobank Arena Convention Center 1001 Truxtun Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93301
Authority Board of Directors Meeting	October 16, 2018	TBD	TBD TBD



1. Crews are busy preparing for the placement of concrete girders at the overcrossing for Road 27 in Madera County. The overpass is located at the northern end of Construction Package 1 where it will take traffic over the high-speed rail line and existing tracks for BNSF. Ultimately, the bridge will be over 700 feet long with the longest span stretching 198 feet.

2. Construction crews make sure a steel rebar cage will be centered when it's covered with concrete. The structure is one of the pillars for a bridge designed to carry trains over Garces Highway near Scofield Avenue in Kern County. When complete, it will be approximately 102 feet long and 52 feet wide, with abutments at each end of the structure.