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Catrina's Corner

Catrina Blair Small Business Advocate



High-Speed Rail Work Continues During Coronavirus Crisis

Oh, how the world has changed during the last three months. The COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe and moved most of us right out of our offices into our homes where work continues on the California high-speed rail project. Hats off to our executive, human resources and information technology (IT) teams who implemented our teleworking plan in no time at all.

In early March, the Authority hosted a free Small Business Matchmaking event at the Department of General Services in West Sacramento. Dozens of small businesses showed up. They were able to network with each other and talk to state agencies and

"You'll notice a diverse workforce at our construction and office sites. Economic experts say employing a diverse workforce with various cultural and language skills gives businesses a competitive edge."

Catrina Blair
Small Business Advocate
California High-Speed Rail Authority

Investing in California Small Businesses

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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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Catrina's Corner

Catrina Blair Small Business Advocate



prime contractors, who staffed information tables. But the main attraction was two teams of prime contractors, who qualified to bid on the Authority's **Track & Systems contract**. About 100 people talked one-on-one with the teams. They learned the first portion of the contract for 119 miles of Central Valley construction is worth about \$1.6 billion. The entire contract calls for designing and building the railway, electrical, communications and safety systems, maintenance facilities and their operations for Phase 1 of high-speed rail. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the deadline for Track & Systems proposals has been extended to September 15.

We held two open houses in early March for the **Bakersfield to Palmdale**

Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIR/EIS). However, plans changed when we scheduled the public hearing for the document and meetings for the **Burbank to Los Angeles project section**. To keep people safe from COVID-19, our IT and communications team members webcast the meetings and hearing. By stepping up to the challenge, they helped us stay on track to meet a federally mandated deadline to environmentally clear all of Phase 1 by 2022.

Meanwhile, construction moves forward on high-speed rail. California deemed that construction is an essential activity. So, when you see people working at high-speed rail construction sites, know that our contractors, consultants and staff are practicing social



In March, Small Advocate Catrina Blair (left) and Small Business Associate Manprit Bains (center) staffed the check-in area at the Small Business Matchmaking Event hosted by the Authority at the Department of General Services in West Sacramento. Nearly 100 small business owners and representatives signed up to speak one-on-one with teams of prime contractors who qualified to bid on the high-speed rail Track & Systems contract.

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 (DVBES) and Micro-Businesses (MBs).

distancing and taking other measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus while they get the job done.

The theme of this newsletter is diversity, and you'll notice a diverse workforce at our construction and office sites. Economic experts say employing a diverse workforce with various cultural and language skills gives businesses a competitive edge and extends their reach into communities that have been excluded in the past.

This issue is filled with stories about ethnic minorities and women who are engineers, construction workers and small business owners. They've overcome numerous obstacles to get where they are today. They're also proud to serve as role models to those coming through the ranks behind them, especially young people.

Did you know that May is Small Business Month? Of course, the virus pandemic has left many small businesses struggling. If your firm needs a hand, check out our story on how California and the U.S. Small Business Administration can help. We want to make sure small businesses get back on firm footing because they play a major role in our project and the economic engine for California and the rest of the nation.

Catrina Blair



1. & 2. Small business owners and representatives gathered in West Sacramento in early March to talk to state agencies and prime contractors, who staffed information tables at a Small Business Matchmaking Event hosted by the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

3. Small Business Outreach Specialist Damon Dorn talked to attendees at the Authority's matchmaking event about how they can get involved in the high-speed rail project, which is under construction in California's Central Valley.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Small Business Events

**Subject to change*

May 12, 2020
Business Advisory Council
CANCELED

May 14, 2020
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Webcast Meeting Online
 Time: TBD

June 25, 2020
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Webcast Meeting Online
 Time: TBD

July 16, 2020
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Webcast Meeting Online
 Time: TBD

August 11, 2020
Business Advisory Council
 Webcast Meeting Online
 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

August 13, 2020
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting
 Webcast Meeting Online
 Time: TBD



Track and Systems RFP HSR19-13

Small Business and Non-Small Business Contact Information

FIRM	SMALL BUSINESS	NON-SB CONTACT
Bombardier-Salcef-Weitz Consortium	Mr. Mina Wassef mina.wassef@weitz.com (571) 305-3518	Mr. Nitant Sethi nitant.sethi@rail.bombardier.com (412) 526 - 5475
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For more information, go to https://hsr.ca.gov/business/contractors/track_and_systems.aspx

2020 Business Plan Deadlines Extended

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has extended the deadline for the adoption of the **Draft 2020 Business Plan** until July 1. The comment period for the plan has been extended until June 1.

The California legislature asked for the change. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, lawmakers said extra time was needed to set up public hearings and other meetings.

The Draft 2020 Business Plan gives a detailed analysis of costs, funding, ridership, challenges and risks for the high-speed rail project. Based on Cap-and-Trade estimates, Authority projections show there will be from \$20.6 billion to \$23.3 billion in funding available through 2030. The Draft Business Plan proposes to use those funds to:

- Deliver 119 miles of high-speed rail that's currently under construction in the Central Valley between Madera and Popular Avenue just north of Bakersfield
- Extend the Central Valley line south to Bakersfield and north to Merced creating the first 171-mile interim operating segment
- Environmentally clear the Phase 1 system from San Francisco to Los Angeles/Anaheim
- Complete bookend investments in Northern and Southern California with our regional partners

Comments on the Draft 2020 Business Plan can be submitted via online form at https://www.hsr.ca.gov/about/business_plans/2020/ or by email at DraftBP2020@hsr.ca.gov, U.S. Postal mail or via voicemail at (916) 384-9516.

Did You Know?

Want to stay in touch with the Authority? Try **ConnectHSR**. It's the Authority's free online portal that's open to the public, which includes both large and small businesses.

"The vendor registry is a way for businesses to stay connected to the Authority, the high-speed rail project and each other," explained Small Business Advocate Catrina Blair. "We send them information from the Authority and our prime contractors. Companies can learn about upcoming events, projects, and bid opportunities."

Companies can put their information into the registry including where they work, what type of services or products they offer, gross income and types of certification they have. If small businesses aren't certified, they can go to a link that gives them information on how to become certified.

Prime contractors can access ConnectHSR to find subcontractors. Small businesses can find firms they want to partner with. By joining hands, businesses can improve their chances of winning a contract.

For more information go to ConnectHSR at https://www.hsr.ca.gov/small_business/vendor_search.aspx



Virgin Train on Track to Vegas: Another big boost for the California-to-Las Vegas high-speed rail project. Last month, a **California finance committee approved \$600 million in bonds** for the Virgin Train-Brightline railway. Laws will allow Virgin to get four times that amount for a total of \$2.4 billion. The funding comes on the heels of the approval of \$1 billion in federal bonds. Officials said it could mean construction on the Victorville to Las Vegas high-speed rail line will start before the end of 2020. (Photo courtesy of Brightline)

Improving Function at Burbank Junction: Metrolink Gets Grant Funds: Metrolink's efforts to deploy faster trains and improve safety just got a major boost. The Federal Railroad Administration has awarded the Southern California commuter rail system **\$10.7 million in grant funds**. The money will go towards environmental analysis, engineering and construction between the Glendale and Burbank Junction. The project includes track and signal improvements and making pedestrian crossings compliant with the American Disabilities Act. Nearly 100 passengers and freight trains a day travel the tracks between Burbank and Glendale. (Photo courtesy of Metrolink)



Caltrain Tests Trains: Caltrain is putting new electrified train cars to the test. Last month, testing began on 7-car trainsets being manufactured at Stadler Rail's Salt Lake City plant. Those tests followed **structural tests on train cars** in January. Caltrain is **electrifying its corridor** from San Francisco to San Jose and replacing diesel trains on that line. The Authority contributed over \$700 million to the project so high-speed rail can share tracks with Caltrain. (Photo courtesy of Caltrain)



Avila Traffic Safety Works With Pride

Drive by the Central Valley regional offices, you will find construction crews doing underground utility work for future high-speed rail construction. Standing close by is **Avila Traffic Safety**, fulfilling their daily mission to deliver “safety with pride” every day, to every customer.

“It’s been crazy busy over the last year. Now that high-speed rail has kicked it up a notch, it’s adding to our workload in a positive way,” said Kellie Avila, founder and president of the company based in Atascadero.

Founded in 2011, Avila Traffic Safety, a woman-owned Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, was formerly doing business as Associated Traffic Safety. However, a new outlook and mission led to a rebranding of the company early last year.

“Of course, we think our people set us apart from our competition,” added Avila. “We strive to set a standard of safety and customer service that puts us at the top of the selection process for traffic control services.”

Avila Traffic Safety began working on the high-speed rail project in 2016 providing traffic control services on various construction sites. Avila provides flagging services, construction area and permanent signage, as well as traffic control plans, rental

“Of course, we think our people set us apart from our competition. We strive to set a standard of safety and customer service that puts us at the top of the selection process for traffic control services.”

Kellie Avila
Founder/President
Avila Traffic Safety



1. Avila Traffic Safety joined the high-speed rail project in 2016. The small business provides flagging services, signs, traffic control plans and barriers when streets need to be blocked off for construction work and moving underground utilities.

2. Avila Traffic Safety keeps a huge selection of safety equipment in the firm’s warehouse, including signs, cones and barriers or k-rails that can be filled with water.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

equipment such as temporary water-filled k-rail for safety and other items. Working on the high-speed rail project has allowed this Central Coast business to expand their services into the San Joaquin Valley and three high-speed rail construction packages.

Avila Traffic Safety has provided services at major high-speed rail construction sites including the **Wasco Viaduct**, Davis and Peach overcrossings in Fresno County, and the Idaho and **Kent** overcrossings in Kings County. With crews dedicated only to high-speed rail, many new jobs have been created in the company.

In fact, Avila Traffic Safety's very own Foster Ellis was dispatched as the 2,000th worker on the project.

"We wanted the opportunity to be part of something to benefit the future of California. We are always looking to diversify our customer base and we're proud to be part of the high-speed rail project," said Avila.

Augie Blancas



1. Kellie Avila launched her business in 2011. She said joining the high-speed rail project has helped Avila Traffic Safety expand and hire more workers. "It's been crazy busy over the last year. It's adding to our workload in a positive way," said Avila.

2. Avila Traffic Safety is working on all three high-speed rail construction packages in the Central Valley. The company's crews have provided services at several construction sites, including the Wasco Viaduct, Davis and Peach overcrossings in Fresno County, and the Idaho and Kent overcrossings in Kings County.

3. Avila Traffic Safety also rents equipment, including trucks, to companies doing traffic control. The attenuator truck is designed to absorb the impact of a crash, decrease damage to workers and the vehicle.

Fullerton-Based Firm Paves Way for High-Speed Rail Waterway Crossings



Creating a better tomorrow, today. Vik Bapna's mission statement grew out of a holistic approach to watershed and stormwater management.

In 2006, Bapna transitioned from a 17-year career with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District to cofounding Fullerton-based **California Watershed Engineering (CWE)** with his Los Angeles County Public Works colleague Jason Pereira.

Today, the minority-owned Orange County civil engineering, water resources and environmental engineering firm has around 35 employees. Certified as a Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, it now counts California high-speed rail as one of the feathers in its cap.

For five years, CWE has worked as a subcontractor to STV earning over \$926,000 for conducting hydraulic and water quality

analysis for the Environmental Impact Statement for high-speed rail's **Los Angeles to Anaheim** segment.

The analysis looks at impacts high-speed rail bridges and overpasses could have on waterways. That's unique in the dense urban environment which plans to integrate high-speed rail with existing commuter passenger service, as well as freight service.

"As transportation folks look to lay down proposed track, they're not looking from a [water] perspective," Bapna said of the work that adheres to local, state and federal guidelines. "We analyze that and get back to the team if there are issues.

Since two tracks will be dedicated to high-speed rail, CWE also looks at water quality impacts related to widening the existing track system.

The project has proved to be a good fit.

In his early days with the county, Bapna recalled, "There were a lot of projects that needed to be developed, first-of-their-kind projects. That was our focus at the start, and we've grown since then."

CWE has successfully designed and supported the construction of many projects from **wetlands development for the City of Torrance** to a project using **runoff for irrigation and toilets in the City of Santa Monica**.

Bapna's worked on large watersheds, including the Los Angeles River, San Gabriel River, Dominguez Channel, and Los Angeles

"There were a lot of projects that needed to be developed, first-of-their-kind projects. That was our focus at the start, and we've grown since then."

Vic Bapna
Co-founder
California Watershed Engineering



1. Staff Engineer Kayla Kilgo evaluates scour potential (possibility of soil erosion) of a river system for California Watershed Engineering (CWE).



2. CWE co-founder Vic Bapna inspects water quality samplers in a subsurface vault at the John Wayne Airport in Orange County.

Harbor. He's most proud of developing one of California's first urban watershed management plans in the Sun Valley area. A **park with baseball and soccer fields** sits on top of an infiltration system that captures stormwater and infiltrates it back into the underground aquifer to improve water quality.

As for challenges along the way, Bapna recalled the precarious timing of launching CWE. It happened during the 2008 financial crisis, a time when public agencies wanted better quality and had fewer dollars to spend.

Part of what makes watershed management work so enjoyable is no matter the project "water does not think of political boundaries."

"It flows the way it flows," Bapna said, describing his passion. "How do you provide the most benefit to the community that you work in?"

The same goes for CWE's role in the development of electrified high-speed rail.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the project built and sitting in the train to visit family in Northern California," he said.

Micah Flores



1. California Watershed Engineering (CWE) co-founder Jason Pereira was honored with the Fortune Magazine Inner City Top 100 Award. CWE was ranked 41st on a list of 100 growing and innovative inner-city businesses.

2. In 2006, Vik Bapna left a 17-year career with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and co-founded CWE with his Los Angeles County Public Works colleague Jason Pereira.

3. CWE civil engineer and Director of Water Resources Bill Willardson, Ph.D. evaluated water scouring a cut off wall in a streambed.

4. In preparation for a (water) hydraulics analysis, a CWE staff member confirmed the size of a drain sending water to the Los Angeles River.

5. CWE co-founder Vik Bapna joined his staff and their families participating in a volunteer cleanup effort at the Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve.

From “Young Company” to Leader in Information Technology

The late 1990s was a time when any new internet business venture was golden, until it wasn't. Venture capitalists poured billions of dollars into new start-ups until the big payoffs didn't happen. Overnight, the dot-com era stopped.

Why?

That is the question that **Kais Menoufy** took on in 2000 as he started up his “young company.” He knew any new business needed a strategic plan. He also realized that starting small, but thinking big, would grow his company to a successful and sustainable level over time.

Today, **Delegata Corporation** has evolved into one of the most successful international information technology and management consulting firms in Sacramento. And it is among the many certified small businesses lending its expertise to the California High-Speed Rail Program.

Delegata provides program delivery services for technology solutions to assist high-speed rail with performance measurement and management of its myriad construction projects.

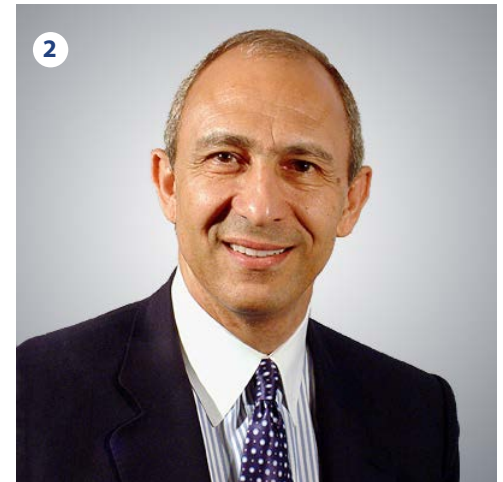
“We are not a product company,” Menoufy offered. “We are a consulting firm and we provide solutions that work with software products across many platforms.”

Menoufy has years of experience in establishing and successfully expanding information management business solutions, both domestically and internationally.

When he formed Delegata Corporation in 2000, Menoufy wanted to incorporate holistic delivery solutions to complex projects. In designing strategic solutions that enable complex business transformations of people, process, technology, information, and measurement, Delegata has earned a reputation for high quality and trust

with their partners in business and in the community.

“We created both a home for seasoned experts and a knowledge measurement system called the Diamond Mind, which houses over 6,000 historical artifacts from prior engagements. As an example, when we were hired for high-speed rail, we leveraged those artifacts. We knew it was going to work,” he said.



“We are not a product company. We are a consulting firm and we provide solutions that work with software products across many platforms.”

Kais Menoufy
Owner
Delegata Corporation

1. & 2. Kais Menoufy launched the Delegata Corporation in Sacramento in 2000. Today, he provides IT solutions to the California High-Speed Rail Authority and several other state agencies including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

1



Delegata[®]

Ranked No. 2 on Sacramento Business Journal's top Information Technology companies in 2014, Delegata boasts an impressive clientele list of California state departments. They include Caltrans, CalPERS, the Department of Motor Vehicles, Healthcare Services, CalSTA, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the Department of Insurance.

With its burgeoning portfolio, Delegata continues to grow. Menoufy said he anticipates hiring an additional 20 employees in 2020, an estimated 30 percent growth in his workforce.

Menoufy said having the California High-Speed Rail Authority as a client helps to boost his company's profile and expand its knowledge base. "It enhances us because we are applying what we know in a very innovative undertaking," he added.

Despite the time constraints of running a business, Menoufy has been immersed in charitable programs that support young adults.

Building Bridges cultivates relationships of diversity between the East and West through events, academic partnerships and diplomatic ties. **Closing the Gap** funds programs that support thousands of low-income and minority students with tutoring and more.

"We fund programs that help students with higher education," he said. "Closing the Gap has helped more than 3,700 students go to college in 11 years. We're now serving hundreds of disadvantaged students across the Sacramento region, as well as international communities."

Ricci Graham



1. Delegata founder Kais Menoufy said his company continues to grow and he hopes to add 20 more employees to his roster in 2020.

2. It's not all work and no play for the staff at Delegata Corporation. The firm's founder, Kais Menoufy, joined employees and their families for an afternoon of fun at Sacramento's Capitol Bowl.

3. In January, Kais Menoufy gathered Delegata employees to celebrate the birthday of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They discussed the importance of true leadership and equality.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Help for Small Businesses Hurt by COVID-19 Crisis

Around the nation, small businesses have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and that includes many of the 553 small businesses working on the high-speed rail project. As business dried up or slowed to a trickle, the federal government and the state of California stepped up to offer help.

In March, President Trump signed the \$2 trillion CARES Act to provide financial assistance to workers, small businesses and non-profit organizations experiencing impacts of the coronavirus crisis.

Within two weeks, the money ran out for the \$349 billion **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)** to help companies keep employees and the **Economic Injury Disaster Loan** allowing small businesses to borrow up to \$2 million for working capital. Also gone was funds for the **emergency advance on the loan**.

By April 23, Congress passed a second bill to replenish the Paycheck Protection Program with \$310 billion. "This allows small businesses to keep workers on their payroll," explained Garth MacDonald, a Small

Business Administration (SBA) spokesman with the Office of Disaster Assistance. "The funds can go towards payroll, rent, utilities and mortgage interest. The loan is forgiven if workers stay on the firms' payroll for eight weeks."

Meanwhile, California Governor Gavin Newsom created a Business and Jobs Recovery Task Force. He named billionaire and former presidential candidate Tom Steyer as the task force's chief advisor. Former Governors Wilson, Davis, Schwarzenegger and Brown are on the task force along with other business heavyweights, including former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen and Disney Executive Bob Iger.

"I have asked and tasked some of the best and brightest minds that we could source," Newsom said. "We have tasked 80 of them to begin to work through each and every sector of our economy to put together tangible, actionable ideas for short term, medium, and long-term economic recovery."

Governor Newsom announced small

businesses with less than \$5 million in taxable sales can defer payment of sales and use taxes up to \$50,000 for up to a year.

There is also help for small businesses who don't qualify for federal help. The state allocated \$50 million in emergency funds for a **Small Business Loan Guarantee** program. Companies that have up to 750 employees can get a micro-loan through the **California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank)**.

"Not everybody has the capacity to get an SBA loan," Newsom explained. "So, it's an additional contribution for the state to address those that may otherwise fall through the crack."

Go to <https://www.ibank.ca.gov/small-business-finance-center/> for more information on California's help for small businesses.

Businesses can go to www.sba.gov/disaster to see when they can apply for the federal Paycheck Protection Program and if any money is available for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance. As of April 16, the SBA said there had been more than 1.6 million applications for PPP loans approved for nearly \$339 billion.

Karen Massie

The screenshot shows two website pages side-by-side. The left page is from the SBA website, titled "Coronavirus Relief Options" with a sub-header "1. Congress passed new legislation after money ran out on federal programs designed to help small businesses hurt by the COVID-19 crisis." The right page is from the iBank website, titled "Small Business Finance Center (SBFC)" with a sub-header "2. Governor Newsom has announced that California small businesses who don't qualify for federal help can apply online for a micro-loan from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank)." The iBank page also features a "Small Business Disaster Relief" banner.

1. Congress passed new legislation after money ran out on federal programs designed to help small businesses hurt by the COVID-19 crisis. They appropriated more funds for the Paycheck Protection Program. Small businesses will be able to apply on the Small Business Administration (SBA) website. In case Congress saves other rescue programs, the SBA has left up links to the Economic Injury Disaster Loan and Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance.

2. Governor Newsom has announced that California small businesses who don't qualify for federal help can apply online for a micro-loan from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank).

Tiny Insect has High-Speed Rail Builders Buzzing

Every time it's mentioned in a meeting I've attended, there's a slight pause just before giggling fills the room. They're laughing about the **Crotch bumble bee**, but they soon realize the bee's plight is no joke.

Named for British entomologist **George Robert Crotch**, the Crotch bumble bee or *Bombus crotchii* is very real and so is the buzz the tiny insect has generated among those charged with building high-speed rail in California.

Last year, it was named as a **candidate for the endangered species list**, along with Franklin's bumble bee, Suckley Cuckoo bumble bee and the Western bumble bee. Over the last few decades, their numbers have severely declined in California, including areas for future construction of high-speed rail.

"Bees pollinate trees, flowers and other plants needed by creatures large and small for food and shelter. We want the bees to stay around and continue their critical role in the world's ecosystem."

Mark McLoughlin
Director of Environmental Services
California High-Speed Rail Authority

When the California Fish and Game Commission voted to put the bees on the endangered list, the **California Farm Bureau Federation and other agricultural associations sued**. They claimed state law doesn't mention insects and that farming interests would be harmed if protecting bumblebees stops farms from using honeybees for pollination.

While opponents battle it out in court, the Authority has decided to include bumble bees in environmental documents that would prepare future high-speed rail sections for construction. The documents call for conducting surveys and implementing measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts on the bees' habitat. "We want to be good neighbors," said Mark McLoughlin, the Authority's Director of Environmental Services. "Bees pollinate trees, flowers and other plants that are needed by creatures large and small for food and shelter. We want the bees to stay around and continue their critical role in the world's ecosystem."

Karen Massie

Photo courtesy of Microbiologist Nancy Hamlett



Photo courtesy of Stephanie McKnight/Xerces Society



1. & 2. The Crotch bumble bee (pictured) has been named as a candidate for the California endangered species list, along with Franklin's bumble bee, Suckley Cuckoo bumble bee and the Western bumble bee. Their numbers have severely declined in future high-speed rail construction areas prompting the Authority to include the bees in environmental documents in those areas. The documents call for conducting surveys and implementing measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts on the bees' habitat.

Pressing on with Preliminary Environmental Work for High-Speed Rail

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the Authority to get used to different ways of communicating. The issue was front and center as staff members conducted recent open house meetings associated with the first environmental documents for high-speed rail sections in the Southern California region.

Everything was normal in early March when people attended community meetings in Lancaster and Bakersfield. Residents, property owners, elected officials and stakeholders got an opportunity to see four alternative alignments and a design option for the 80-mile Bakersfield to Palmdale project section. They include stations in downtown Bakersfield and Palmdale, maintenance facility sites, electrical connections and utility infrastructure for high-speed rail.

The **Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIR/EIS)** was released on February 28 and contains the preferred alignment recommend by Authority staff. It's described as Alternative 2 with the Refined César Chávez National Monument Design Option.

"The preferred alternative was selected

after local communities and stakeholders provided their input," explained Central Valley Regional Director Diana Gomez. "This alternative also had fewer negative impacts on cultural resources, schools, affordable

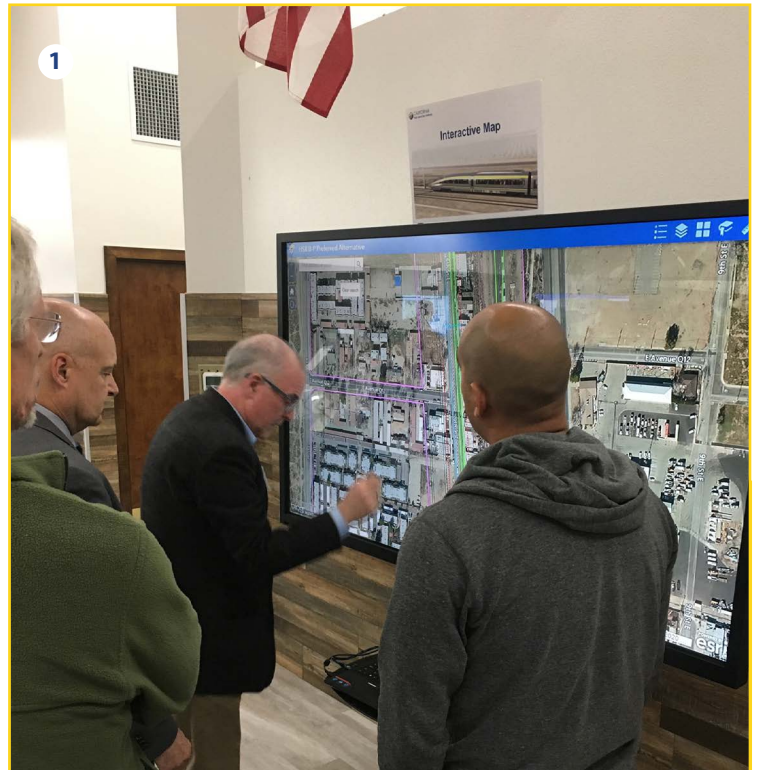
housing, minorities' communities, agricultural activities and mining."

Most people wanted to see if they'll be impacted by high-speed rail. A public hearing to take people's comments was live-streamed

1. At an Open House meeting in Lancaster, Construction Communications Manager Dan Galvin used an aerial map to discuss four alternative alignments for the Bakersfield to Palmdale project section.

2. Central Valley Regional Director Diana Gomez explained that Authority staff members selected a preferred alternative for the Bakersfield to Palmdale project section after local communities and stakeholders provided their input.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements



"The team has completed a significant amount of work to date. We will continue to stay focused to complete the documents."

Diana Gomez
Central Valley Regional Director
California High-Speed Rail Authority

online in April. People also sent in comments via email and the U.S. mail. The final EIR/EIS document for Bakersfield to Palmdale is expected in 2021.

Caution about the coronavirus prompted the Authority to set up webcasts for public meetings scheduled for Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles. A few people showed up in person in Burbank. However, about three dozen people logged on to each webcast about the **Burbank to Los Angeles** project section.

Meanwhile, the Authority plans to keep pressing forward to environmentally clear other project sections and greenlight them for construction. The **San Jose to Merced** Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was issued in April and community meetings are expected later this month. The Authority plans to release the Burbank to Los Angeles EIR/EIS this month and the San Francisco to San Jose document is scheduled to go out in June. The Palmdale to Burbank and Los Angeles to Anaheim documents will follow in late 2020.

“The team has completed a significant amount of work to date,” Gomez said. “We will continue to stay focused to complete the documents.”

Karen Massie



1. & 2. In early March, almost 50 people showed up in Bakersfield for an Open House hosted by the Authority. The community meeting was held to give people an opportunity to make comments on the Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS).

3. Several copies of the Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft EIR/EIS were available for the public’s perusal. The huge document is filled with diagrams, maps and explanations about four alternatives and the preferred alignment, which is described as Alternative 2 with a design option.

4. Most people came to the community meetings to see if their home or business will be impacted by high-speed rail. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, a public hearing to take people’s comments was live-streamed online in April. The Authority also elected to extend the public review period for the Draft EIR/EIS by 15 days until April 28.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Regional Delivery Manager Empowers Women Engineers to Follow in Her Footsteps

"It's long been my strong desire to reach equitable heights," exclaimed Noopur Jain. "It was a huge motivation to choose engineering and prove myself in a male-dominated field." As the Southern California Regional Delivery Manager for the California High-Speed Rail Authority, Jain is excited to make history with the project and the unique opportunity to construct the nation's first high-speed rail.

She had a goal when she attended college in India. She graduated with honors and earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master's in structural engineering. In the United States, she became a registered Professional Engineer (PE) and Structural Engineer (SE) in multiple states. To put that into perspective, Jain said obtaining structural engineering licenses in Illinois and California is equivalent to earning a doctorate.

She's also excelled in different roles with highly respected infrastructure firms. Jain

served as a project manager and senior structural engineer with AECOM and senior bridge engineer with HNTB.

After 20 years in the transportation industry, Jain is tasked with delivering high-speed rail project sections in Southern

California and part of the Central Valley. She gets the job done with help from state staff, consultants and third-party stakeholders.

In her former role as Statewide Engineering Manager she led critical work, including preliminary geotechnical investigations in the San Gabriel Mountains. "There was no road access, so we had to access the site via helicopter," she explained. "Crews were drilling over 2000-foot-deep borings in a seismic fault zone to study complex geologic conditions for constructing a future high-speed rail tunnel."

Jain also carries an important perspective of diversity and recalled early challenges in her career. She encountered team members who didn't like that a younger woman of color immigrated to the United States and quickly advanced on a project. Jain believes she has succeeded in the male dominated construction industry because she brings something to the table others don't. "I am

"It's long been my strong desire to reach equitable heights. It was a huge motivation to choose engineering and prove myself in a male-dominated field."

Noopur Jain, PE, SE
Southern California Regional Delivery Manager
California High-Speed Rail Authority



1. After talking to students at the University of Southern California, Noopur Jain, a civil and structural engineer joined students holding up #Iwillride signs and pledged to hop aboard high-speed rail when trains start rolling.

2. Noopur Jain obtained civil and structural engineering degrees and spent 20 years in the transportation industry before she joined the California High-Speed Rail Authority. As the Southern California Regional Delivery Manager, she's tasked with delivering high-speed rail project sections in Southern California and part of the Central Valley.

many differences packaged into one – generation, gender, race and culture,” she said.

She attributes much of her passion to her father and repeats his mantra for success, “Keep your spark ignited and do something meaningful every day.” Jain said he worked as a structural and civil engineer, guiding her and stressing equanimity, simplicity, honesty, integrity and spirituality.

It’s obviously working. In 2017, Jain was recognized by the **Engineering News-Record** and put on the **Top 20 Under 40 list on the state** and **national level**. She’s a great role model and believes she can empower a new generation of women to follow in her footsteps. Jain knows the road will not be easy. She recognizes that much more work needs to be done for women to reach equitable heights in engineering and construction. She constantly shares her story with young girls in schools, actively participates in Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS), and brings awareness as a leader of the needs of diversity in a growing and connected world.

Yaqeline Castro



1. Noopur Jain is a registered professional and structural engineer in multiple states including California, Washington, Utah, Illinois, Texas and Ohio.

2. Noopur Jain talked to students at the Los Angeles Zoo. She discussed obstacles she’s faced in her engineering career, but told students, especially young women, that they can overcome the challenges if they stay focused.

3. Despite long hours at work, Noopur Jain took time out for students at Gahr High School in Cerritos. In 2017, Jain was put on the Top 20 Under 40 list for the state and national level for the weekly magazine Engineering News-Record.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

The Son of a Self-Professed Engine-Nerd

James Tung's journey into a career in engineering can be measured as a testament to a parent's influence in shaping the direction of their young teen.

"I'd say my dad was the biggest inspiration," said Tung, who endearingly referred to his father, Edward, as an "engine-nerd." "He was a civil and electrical engineer. I saw him working on a lot of projects growing up.

"Anytime we went on vacation, we'd be taking pictures of buildings and my dad would be off to the side, taking pictures of OCS (overhead contact system) wires - wires that power the train."

Today, Tung is a Project Manager for WSP, overseeing efforts to build the nation's first high-speed rail system in the **San Francisco to San Jose Project Section**. But before

landing at WSP, Tung navigated a challenging academic course load at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Engineering degree, Tung enrolled in Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University where he graduated with a master's in Civil Infrastructure Engineering in 2005.

James was working in Virginia when a recruiter contacted him, gauging his interest in working for Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB), which since has been acquired by WSP.

"I always had an interest in working at PB," James said. "In school, it was just one of those high-profile infrastructure companies that everyone knew about. They were responsible for some of the biggest projects around, and as such, became the topic of some of our case studies."

"There's this perception that engineering is all heavy math related puzzles. As your career develops, you'll notice that relationship building is also an essential aspect of engineering."

James Tung, PE
Project Manager
WSP



1. Engineer James Tung is a Project Manager for WSP, the Rail Delivery Partner for the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Tung is overseeing efforts to build the nation's first high-speed rail system in the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section.

2. Last year, James Tung explained what the high-speed rail alignment alternatives were to residents and other stakeholders who attended a San Francisco Bay Area community meeting in Santa Clara.

In 2006, Tung was off to San Diego to work for PB – a multinational engineering and design firm with approximately 14,000 employees worldwide. In 2010, WSP relocated Tung to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he began working on the California High-Speed Rail project.

The general perception is that succeeding in engineering requires the requisite acumen to master mathematics and various sciences. However, Tung offered a unique assessment of what it takes to truly launch a successful career in engineering.

“There’s this perception that engineering is all heavy math related puzzles, which is a fair assumption coming out of engineering school. As your career develops, you’ll notice that relationship building is also an essential aspect of engineering,” Tung said. “Networking, knowing who to talk to and where to seek advice, are all parts of the job.”

“The more you put yourself out there, the more relationships you’ll build, and the more opportunities will open up to you.”

Ricci Graham



1. James Tung points to his father as inspiration for becoming an engineer. Tung said, “He was a civil and electrical engineer. I saw him working on a lot of projects growing up.”

2. Tung shared information at a community meeting in the San Francisco neighborhood of Rincon Hill. He explained that high-speed rail will share tracks with Caltrain in that area. (Photo courtesy of Roger Rudick/[Streetsblog](#))

3. According to Tung, there’s more to engineering than math related puzzles. “As your career develops, you’ll notice that relationship building is essential,” he said. “Knowing who to talk to and where to seek advice, are all parts of the job.”

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

Pile Driver Makes Mark on High-Speed Rail

Being in the male-dominated world of construction for 20 years hasn't stopped Mary Riolo from making her mark. Her take-charge attitude has taken her across California and Las Vegas, working on some of the largest projects around before working on California high-speed rail.

Riolo grew up north of Sacramento in Roseville, California. In 1994, a friend convinced her to join the Laborers Union, and six years later she joined the Carpenters Union.

Being part of the Carpenters Union has taken her to work on the San Francisco Bay Bridge for six years, the San Francisco Airport, and the Interstate 680 and State Route 24 interchanges.

When asked about why she enjoys construction, Riolo narrowed it down to three things. "I like the outdoors. It's physical and it's high-energy," she said with a smile.

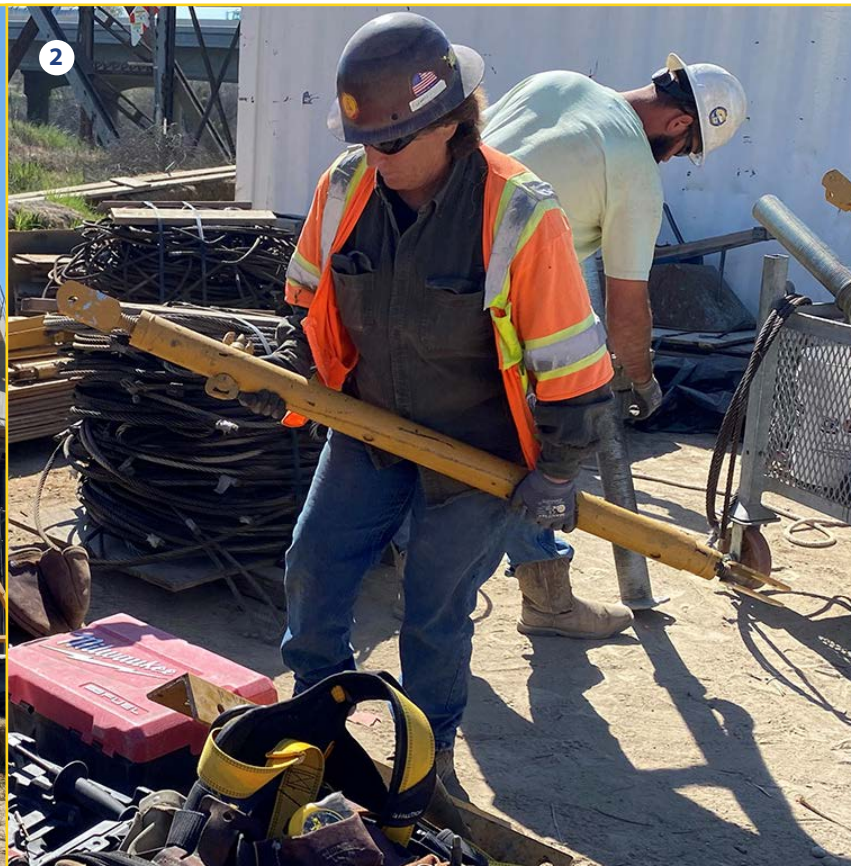
Since coming to Fresno, Mary has worked on the high-speed rail project's **Road 27 overpass** and the **Cedar Viaduct**. She was also instrumental in laying out the formwork on the **San Joaquin River Viaduct** as a carpenter and pile driver.

She has some advice for other women who might be interested in construction. "Women can do this. It's not hard," she said. "Go for it, help out and learn. Fall right in and do it. Construction is a great opportunity, great benefits, and you get to do great things."

Augie Blancas

"Women can do this. It's not hard. Go for it, help out and learn. Fall right in and do it. Construction is a great opportunity, great benefits, and you get to do great things."

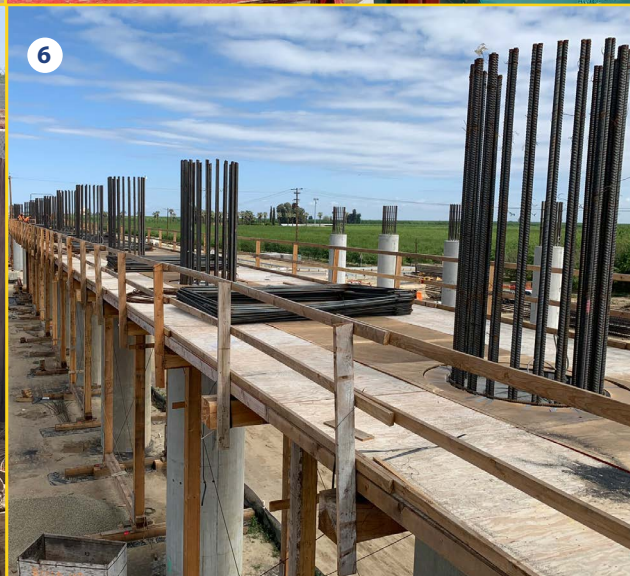
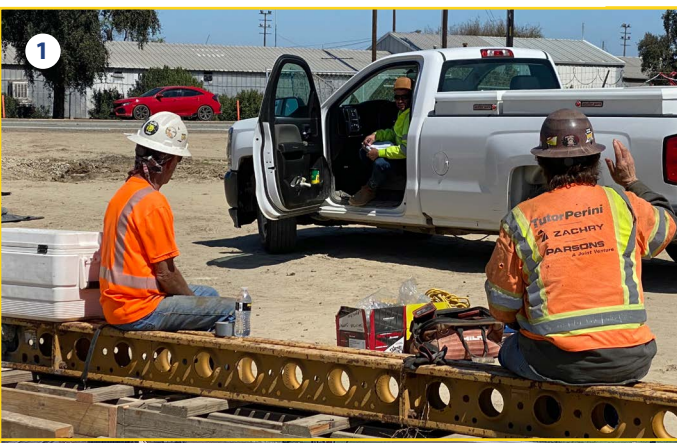
Mary Riolo
Pile Driver
Construction Package 1



1. Pile driver Mary Riolo has worked at several high-speed rail construction sites in the Central Valley, including the San Joaquin River Viaduct.

2. Over the last 20 years, Mary Riolo has worked on several large projects in California and Las Vegas. She encourages other women to get into construction and added, "I like the outdoors. It's physical and it's high-energy."

High-Speed Rail Happenings



1. Construction workers at the Cedar Viaduct in south Fresno take their lunch break. They stay safe by maintaining social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Workers have completed the walls, floor and lid of the Fresno Trench and were pouring concrete for the intrusion protection barrier walls separating high-speed rail and Union Pacific Railroad trains.

3. Ironworkers at the Wasco Viaduct in Kern County were drilling shafts and putting in rebar columns that will be filled with concrete.

4. Signs about COVID-19 safety precautions and a hand washing station greet construction workers and visitors when they arrive at the construction site for the Idaho Avenue overpass in Kings County.

5. & 6. Crews were drilling shafts where rebar will be placed at the Kimberlina Road Viaduct just south of Wasco near State Route 43.

7. Construction crews have poured 465 cubic yards of concrete to form the deck of the Garces Highway Viaduct in Kern County, which is part of Construction Package 4.

8. Crews were pile-driving concrete piles for the Hanford Viaduct near Grangeville Boulevard. Nearly 7,000 piles will be needed to support the viaduct.

*Some photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements



Sacramento Business Wins Rail Contract and Vows to Help Other Firms

"I've always had the entrepreneurial spirit," said environmental scientist Dr. Melanie Harrison Okoro as she recalled launching **Eco-Alpha Environmental and Engineering Services** in 2013. As an African-American woman, she knew it wouldn't be easy. "The timing was right," she said. "There were opportunities in a field where women and minority-owned small businesses were underutilized."

Okoro pointed to her great-grandmother as a catalyst for her interest in water, plants and animals. "[She] woke me and my twin sister up every Saturday at the crack of dawn to go fishing."

At Okoro's side is her husband, Uzoma, an engineer. He was inspired by his father, an engineer who spent 30 years at the California Department of Transportation. Uzoma also liked futuristic technology portrayed in stories such as Star Trek. "Heroes in real life and television gave me a fire for being

the solutions guy," he explained. "That's the person people seek out to make things work."

The couple brought years of experience to their Sacramento-based small business. While studying for her Ph.D., Melanie landed at the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric**

"Our work on high-speed rail not only allows us to participate in a defining project for California but establishes us as a trusted resource for environmental and engineering needs in the region."

Melanie Okoro, Ph.D.
Co-founder
Eco-Alpha Environmental and Engineering Services

Administration working with threatened and endangered fish. Eventually, she became a West Coast Region coordinator for activities involving natural resource management, water quality and aquatic invasive species.

Meanwhile, Uzoma was an engineering supervisor for several Northern California facilities. He also served as Director of Engineering for the **Golden 1 Center**, where he managed a billion-dollar budget and hundreds of workers tasked with building, operating and maintaining the nation's first LEED Platinum arena for the National Basketball Association. It was a team effort. He exclaimed, "We did it. We built a structure that will be at the heart of the city for generations."

Last year, Eco-Alpha won a contract with the Early Train Operator, Deutsche Bahn Engineering & Consulting, USA Inc., which is helping the Authority plan, design, and implement high-speed rail. The Okoro's



1. Environmental scientist Dr. Melanie Okoro and her husband, Uzoma, an engineer, launched their Sacramento-based company, Eco-Alpha Environmental and Engineering Services in 2013.

2. Uzoma Okoro (right) developed a High Performance Building Engineering Program that has trained facility professionals who manage and maintain state buildings and equipment around California.

performed a detailed facilities operation and maintenance cost analysis for train platforms and heavy maintenance facilities. The work included estimates for staffing, costs for operating and maintaining equipment, roads and grounds maintenance and custodial services.

“Our work on high-speed rail not only allows us to participate in a defining project for California but establishes us as a trusted resource for environmental and engineering needs in the region,” Melanie said.

The California Department of General Services (DGS) partnered with Eco-Alpha for its **High Performance Building Engineering Program**. The Okoros conducted a series of classes designed to increase technical acumen for stationary engineers, chief engineers, maintenance technicians and office building managers, who operate and maintain state facilities. The facilities professionals also learned how to implement energy management practices which produce huge time and money savings.

Recently, the City of West Sacramento selected the firm to provide groundwater and wastewater monitoring and support services for the **city’s water treatment plant**. The project makes sure the facility meets stringent drinking water standards.

In 2019, the Okoros joined the Authority’s **Business Advisory Council** as representatives of the **Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce**. They want to advocate for other small businesses and let them know how they can add value and work on the high-speed rail project. Melanie added, “We believe in lifting as we climb. We want to translate our success into success for other small businesses.”

Karen Massie



1. Eco-Alpha Environmental and Engineering Services represents years of experience. After managing several large facilities, Uzoma Okoro was the Director of Engineering for the Golden 1 Center, where he managed a billion-dollar budget and hundreds of workers. Melanie Okoro worked with threatened and endangered species at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

2. Melanie and Uzoma Okoro (center) belong to the Authority’s Business Advisory Council and the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce. They believe taking part in those organizations gives them an opportunity to advocate for other small businesses.

3. Melanie Okoro, Ph.D. (right first row standing) joins stationary engineers, chief engineers, maintenance technicians and office building managers, who went through Eco-Alpha’s High Performance Building Engineering Program. The training has produced huge time and money savings for the state of California.

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

CPUC Business Advocate Works Tirelessly on Behalf of Small Businesses

From the north to the south, mountains, valleys and Pacific Coast, anyone who attends California small business events, will likely find Bezawit Dilgassa there too. As the small business liaison for the **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)**, quite often Dilgassa is hosting the event. "Being able to see a company make a connection at one of our events and from that connection or information I provided, seeing a company flourish makes me value the work I do with CPUC," she said.

It's obvious the CPUC values Dilgassa. She's worked there for 12 years. "My journey with the CPUC began with the Utility Enforcement Branch," she said. "I was hired as a junior regulatory analyst to investigate allegations of consumer fraud, market abuse, and other utility misconduct."

Over the years, she worked her way up to a senior regulatory analyst position where she leads the agency's **Small Business**

Program within the Business and Community Outreach Branch. She's also involved in the agency's **Utility Supplier Diversity Program** which encourages and monitors the inclusion

of diverse businesses in the supply chain of investor-owned utility companies.

Dilgassa's work helps the CPUC meet and exceed its small business participation goals of 25 percent for small businesses (SB) and 3 percent for disabled veteran owned business enterprises (DVBE). That program includes small businesses owned by minorities, women, disabled veterans and those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Prime contractors and state agencies, including the California High-Speed Rail Authority, regularly attend events organized by Dilgassa. She's known for quick smiles and a steely determination. "I'm in a position to offer useful information that opens doors to business opportunities and to see the benefits firsthand," Dilgassa said.

She advises companies to research state agencies' procurement history before marketing to the agencies and their small

"Being able to see a company make a connection at one of our events and from that connection or information I provided, seeing a company flourish makes me value the work I do with CPUC."

Bezawit Dilgassa
Small Business Liaison
California Public Utilities Commission

1



2



1. & 2. Bezawit Dilgassa has worked for the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for 12 years. She started out as junior regulatory analyst and investigated allegations of consumer fraud, market abuse, and other utility misconduct. Today, she leads the agency's Small Business Program within the Business and Community Outreach Branch.

business advocates. “Cal eProcure, the state’s online marketplace, is a great place to start. It offers free research tools and resources,” explained Dilgassa. “Make sure your business has a working webpage that has current information and describes what you do. Respond to solicitations even if you’re not equipped to do the job described.” She added, “It’s also valuable to connect with other businesses to learn from their experiences and set the right expectations.”

Dilgassa has been honored for her work and exceeding the CPUC’s small business goals. The agency received a silver State Agency Recognition Award from the California Department of General Services.

Dilgassa isn’t slowing down. She plans to keep striving to build on the CPUC’s momentum of working with small and diverse businesses. “I’m always looking for more ways to expand our outreach and ensure these businesses are considered for every procurement opportunity,” she declared.

Karen Massie



1. Small Business Liaison Bezawit Dilgassa has been honored many times for her work with the California Public Utilities Commission. In 2018, the agency received a silver State Agency Recognition Award for exceeding its small business goals for small businesses and disabled veteran business enterprises.

2. In February, Dilgassa staffed an information table for the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) at the How to Do Business With the State Workshop in San Jose. She talked to small business owners and representatives about contract opportunities at the CPUC.

3. Dilgassa tells small business owners to research state agencies’ procurement history before marketing to the agencies and their small business advocates. She added, “Being able to see a company make a connection at one of our events and seeing [that] company flourish, makes me value the work I do with CPUC.”

*Photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements

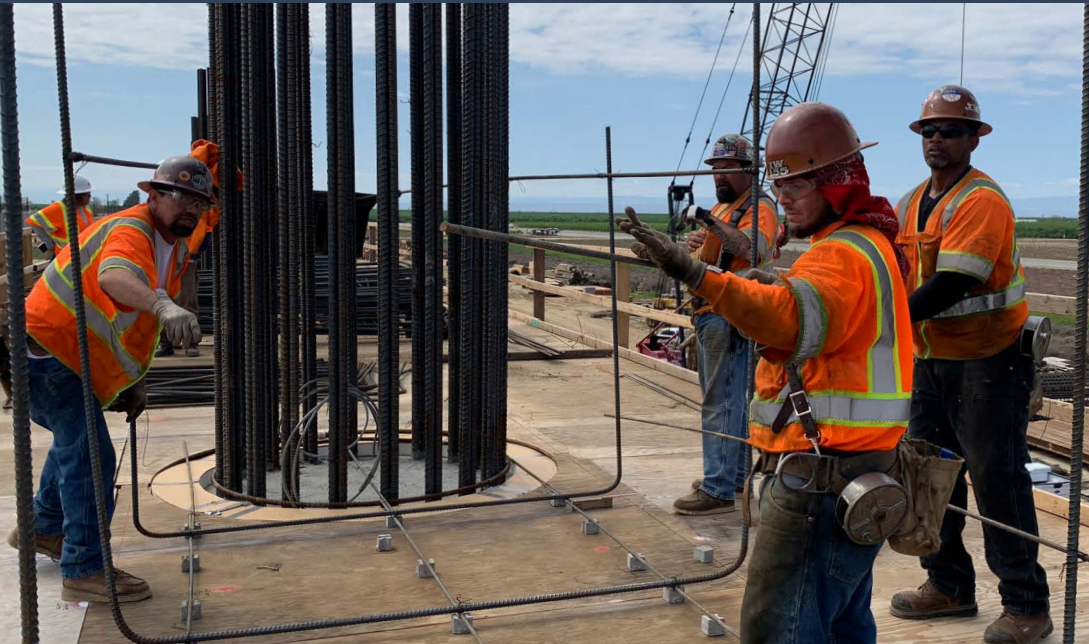




CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

APRIL 2020

LATEST VIDEOS | [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHPEEDRAIL](http://www.youtube.com/cahighspeedrail)



WASCO VIADUCT | KERN COUNTY

Ironworkers are hard at work at the Wasco Viaduct in Kern County. Crews are continuing to drill shafts where rebar will be placed to form columns for the pergola structure (above). On top of the deck, ironworkers with Pacific Steel Group are setting horizontal bars to link the stirrups of the girders for the west side of the pergola (below). When complete, the viaduct and pergola will be nearly 2,000-feet in length.



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SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

AS OF MARCH 2020

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

180 Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises

58 Certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

197 Certified
Small
Businesses

CENTRAL VALLEY:

169 Certified
Small
Businesses

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

169 Certified
Small
Businesses

OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA:

16 Certified
Small
Businesses

