



the **BUSINESS CURVE**

ADVANCING MINORITY & SMALL BUSINESS AFFAIRS

FALL/WINTER 2024

**One-on-One Interview with
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Cover: AOS Specialty Contractors Inc. installing concrete curb and gutter at CCR Phase I location near West - US 378/McSwain Dr (Westbound) and I26 Connector.

Photo courtesy of James Cooper

Greetings,

This year America celebrates the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI was enacted as part of this landmark Civil Rights Act. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. As President John F. Kennedy said in 1963, “Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races [colors, and national origins] contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes or results in racial [color or national origin] discrimination.” [U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division](#)

As a recipient of federal funds, SCDOT has regulations implementing Title VI that not only prohibits practices that have the effect of discrimination but has also embraced programs that enhance equal opportunities through contracting, small business development, workforce development and monitoring. In this issue, we showcase Title VI in action. You will read stories and see photographs of various Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) at work on SCDOT projects, glimpse some of our efforts to reach out to and train DBEs and potential DBEs, learn about our workforce initiatives like the Summer Transportation Institute and our in-house summer internship program, and how the Minority and Small Business Affairs team continues to educate ourselves to strengthen our efforts.

Although there is still work to be done, we are proud of the strides we are making in advancing the spirit of Title VI. We hope that you enjoy reading about what we have done in recent months. Please feel free to reach out to us with viable ideas and recommendations that we could consider via the forthcoming survey we are announcing near the end of this issue.

Best regards,



Greg Davis

Division Director, Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs



Greg Davis and Summer Intern Leila Kelly on-site at the South Main Street Project in Columbia.



Mary Wyeth and Leila Kelly on-site at I-20 Bridge Replacements over Wateree River (Kershaw County).

Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth

Thank you to our many contributors who helped us showcase the hardworking certified DBEs and committed stakeholders who epitomize the spirit and intention of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I would also like to offer special thanks to those who enriched my recent field experiences with learning and laughter.

Warmest regards,

Mary Wyeth

Editor, the Business Curve

One-on-One Interview with Vicki Volponi, Owner, Carolina Construction Supplies, LLC



Vicki Volponi, Owner, Carolina Construction Supplies, LLC in the field.

Photo courtesy of Vicki Volponi

1. Tell readers a little about your business.

Carolina Construction Supplies is a dedicated supplier of products utilized in concrete pavement on highways, airports, and roadways.

2. How long have you been in business?

We are proud to have been in business for nine years; it was founded in 2015.

3. What made you choose this type of business?

When I founded my company, I had no prior experience in construction. It has been quite an unconventional path. Transitioning into the construction supplies sector was a significant shift and steep learning curve for me. For fourteen years, I worked as a paralegal. The skills I honed during my paralegal career— such as research, organization, critical thinking, effective communication and attention to detail provided me with a solid foundation to embark on a new path. I was driven by a strong desire to build something for myself. As I researched various fields, I discovered there were opportunities for me in the infrastructure industry. I chose to be a material supplier because it allowed for slow growth

and conservative management, which I believe are essential for long-term success. I conducted thorough research to identify the areas and scope of work that were truly needed in the market that added value while avoiding heavily saturated industries.

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

We specialize in providing products and accessories utilized in concrete pavement projects such as Dowel Bar Assemblies, Loose Dowels, Tie Bar Assemblies, Tie Bars, and Curing Compound, to name a few.

5. Where did the name come from?

Having lived in South Carolina my entire life, I felt it was important to choose a name that reflects my deep-rooted connection to the region where I wanted to conduct work.

6. How many employees do you have?

Currently, I have three dedicated employees who are instrumental in our operations. I am excited to share that due to the rapid growth of our business, we are planning to expand our team by three additional employees in the near future.

7. What is unique about your business?

From the outset, I embraced the challenges and opportunities that come with being a startup. Our innovative spirit has driven us to not only identify gaps in the market, but also to create solutions that are not only effective but transformative. The agility inherent in our company culture allows us to pivot quickly, adapt to feedback, and continuously improve our offerings. I dedicated a significant amount of time researching the challenges faced by minority, women, and small businesses. This knowledge became the foundation upon which I built my business.

Having well-defined procedures and systems in place has been essential for efficiency, consistency, and reliability. Strong internal processes minimize errors and streamlines workflow, ultimately leading to better service and client satisfaction. In the world of small business, even minor errors can lead to costly outcomes. Whether it's a miscalculation in pricing or having to expedite trucking to meet a deadline, mistakes result in lost revenue, damage to your reputation, and decreased customer trust. Additionally, mistakes often consume valuable time and resources that could be better spent on growth. As small business owners, we often juggle multiple roles, from the day-to-day operations to being in the field. This hands-on involvement is essential for maintaining quality; however, it can often limit our ability to respond to customer inquiries and phone calls as quickly as we would like. Prioritizing customer service and a responsive approach enhanced our customer loyalty and sales. Many small businesses struggle with cash flow issues, which hinder growth and sustainability. During the early stages, I worked part-time on weekends to supplement my income and maintain stability.

8. How long have you been a DBE?

We were DBE Certified in 2017. I'm certified in 17 states which include Iowa and California. I have a warehouse in

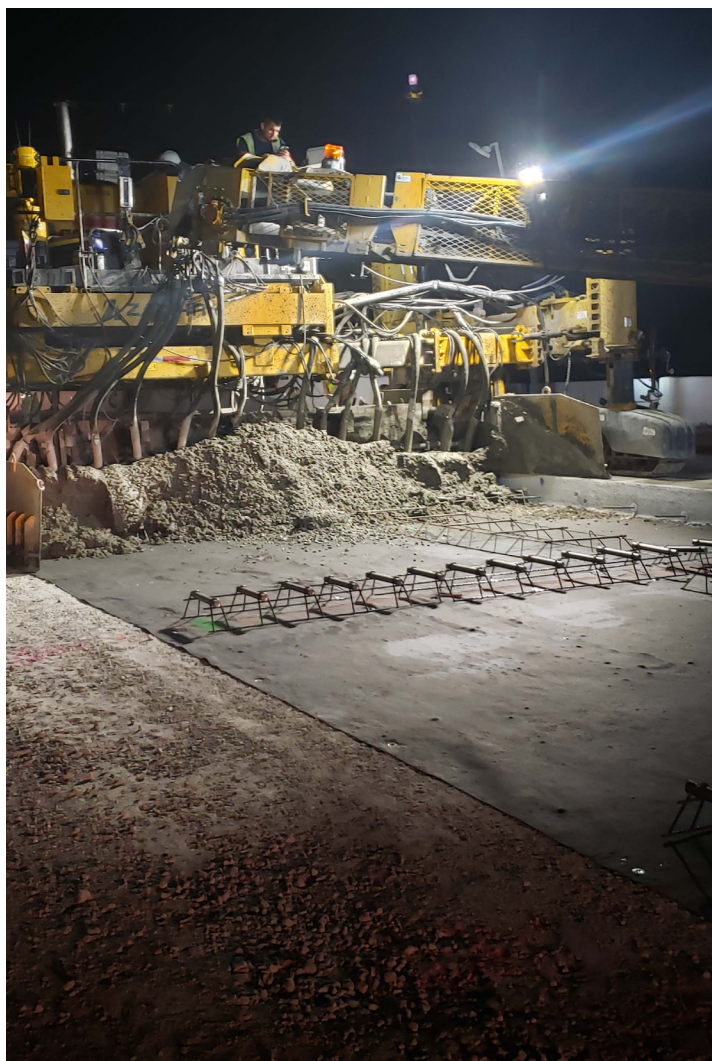
North Charleston, SC and a second location which consists of a small warehouse and fenced in lay down yard in Marion, OH; it positions CCS closer to two manufacturers. That location allows me to better serve other parts of the country.

9. Why did you choose the DBE program?

As a young company, I recognized the immense value that the DBE Certification could provide. It offers access to free education and training courses throughout the year. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to qualify for or apply for up to \$1,500 per year in Training Assistance through tuition reimbursement. Moreover, being added to the Certification Directory enhanced our visibility. Certification is a vital stepping stone to connect with prime contractors, expand my network, and ultimately grow my business. Federally funded contracts require a certain percentage of participation from DBE-certified businesses thereby increasing my chances of collaboration.

10. What are your responsibilities as the business owner?

I wear many hats. I handle the bidding and estimating, contract negotiating, project management, billing, accounts payable and receivable, sales and coordinating delivery schedules.



Field test section for the O-Dowel Basket in SC (Zachry Corp)

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

My greatest accomplishment is building and nurturing strong relationships within the industry and with prime contractors which has led to repeat business and speaks volumes about the quality we've delivered. We have established a solid reputation that keeps our contractors coming back. These partnerships set the foundation for our growth in several other states.

12. How has the SCDOT helped your business grow?

I have received invaluable support from SCDOT's Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs since day one. From the very beginning, Gary Linn, Director of Technical Assistance and DBE Compliance has been instrumental in guiding me through the initial stages of understanding the certification process and providing technical assistance. The Business Development Center provides a variety of specialized training opportunities that are crucial for professional development. I have participated in several courses, including Reading Blue Prints as well as the Certified Erosion Control Prevention and Sediment Control course.

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

One of the most complex projects that I have been involved with was the I-40 and I-77 interchange project in North Carolina. This project presented numerous challenges, particularly as it unfolded during the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruptions caused by the pandemic impacted the market. We faced hyperinflation in the steel market, which affected our material costs. Freight prices were also soaring, further complicating logistics and budget management.

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

I highly recommend pursuing certification. It has been beneficial in establishing connections with contractors, and it has opened doors to valuable networking opportunities. However, it is essential to understand that simply getting certified isn't a guarantee of securing contracts or achieving success. You must have a proactive approach and put in the necessary effort to leverage these opportunities. Certification equips you with tools to navigate the industry effectively, but you have to stay focused and put in the work.

15. What is your long-term business goal?

My primary goal is to achieve consistent growth every year. I intend to expand our capabilities and market presence progressively. In the long term, I aim to take the business further by becoming a manufacturer. Specifically, producing our own dowel bar baskets.

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

I never hesitate to ask for help; I have always sought guidance and clarification when needed. I believe that education is key to staying competitive and informed. I recognize the importance of continuous learning in our industry.

South Carolina DBE Lands Federal Contract

By Damien Page, Marketing Strategist, KRJ Consulting



L to R: Al Austin, Management Consultant, Karen Jenkins, President and CEO, Brenda Anderson, Senior Management Consultant and David Howard, Management Consultant

Photos courtesy of KRJ Consulting, Inc.

Since becoming a certified DBE with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) in 2012, KRJ Consulting (KRJC) has greatly benefited from the support and programs offered by the SCDOT Office of Business Development. As a DBE, KRJC provides strategic planning, project management, and consulting services, and has been privileged to extend these services to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). KRJC plays a key role in developing strategic plans for OSDBU's Wealth Creation Strategy and Equity Action Plans, while also helping to unlock opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses under the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill passed in 2021.

KRJ Consulting partnered with the USDOT OSDBU team to create a national pilot program called "Pathways to Entrepreneurship (P2E): Powering Small Businesses in Emerging Transportation Markets," which was held at USDOT Headquarters in Washington, DC, on Tuesday, September 10. The event attracted approximately 400 participants from across the country to experience an overview of the full P2E pilot program, a capacity-building and technical

assistance initiative created to empower small and disadvantaged businesses seeking to pivot into new and emerging transportation markets; engage HBCU institutions; and educate aspiring HBCU students with an entrepreneurial mindset, helping them explore transportation career options upon graduation.

P2E featured leaders from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of Energy, who were joined by state DOT leaders, nationally acclaimed visionaries, policymakers, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Together, they participated in impactful panel discussions and presentations, offering insights and strategies for small businesses to enter emerging transportation markets. Initial feedback from participants and organizers indicates that the event exceeded expectations and successfully achieved OSDBU's departmental goals.

KRJ Consulting was proud to be the program development partner for this event. Supporting small and disadvantaged businesses has always been at the core of KRJ Consulting's mission, and we are excited to contribute to the growth of these businesses on a national scale by helping them transition into emerging transportation markets. "We look forward to continuing this collaboration with USDOT OSDBU to fully develop and launch the P2E program, bringing its full vision to fruition in the near future," said Karen Jenkins, President and CEO of KRJ Consulting.



KRJC team with USDOT OSDBU staff.

Sixty Years of the Civil Rights Act

The 60th Anniversary of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a visionary initiative of President John F. Kennedy that was signed into Law in 1964 by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson. FHWA's Associate Administrator of the Office of Civil Rights, Ms. Irene Rico reflects on its significant in her guest editorial in the [FHWA's Public Roads - Winter 2024](#).



DBEs At Work



L-R: Ashton Williams, SCDOT Engineering Technician and Markus Corley, a co-owner of Corley Construction onsite at demolition on Browning Road which is part of CCR.

Photo courtesy of Rob Thompson



Cruz Landscaping and Concrete, LLC stepped up for additional work when the prime for the Lorick Avenue project said they also needed Flaggers. Cruz employees had recently completed Flagger's Novice Training offered by the division's Business Development Center held onsite at the Southeastern National Safety Council in Irmo, SC.

Photos courtesy of Cody Crouch

Carolinas Opportunities Greenville

SCDOT’s Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs Division Director, Greg Davis facilitated the breakout session, “Certifications & Qualifications: Navigating the Essentials” at the Carolinas Opportunities 2024 Conference held in Greenville, SC on September 5, 2024. DBE Certification Manager Delica Wingard and DBE Certification Analyst, Maria Hugee teamed up during the company match making session.



L – R: Delicia Wingard, SCDOT; Ebony Sullivan, Cassidy Electric; Mary Allen, Eagle Corps Essentials; Angela McCullough, Tri-Logistics, LLC.



L – R: Delicia Wingard and Maria Hugee, SCDOT; Melinda Stewart Camps, Prmelabs Testing & Screening, LLC; Angela McCullough, Tri-Logistics, LLC.

CONGRATULATIONS NEWLY CERTIFIED DBEs! MARCH 1, 2024 - AUGUST 31, 2024

Impact First	F & S Transport, LLC	Perrys Transport, LLC
1st Choice, LLC	Fundamental Trucking Enterprise, LLC	Phase One Consulting, LLC
404 Concrete, LLC	Genesis Line, LLC	Pinhoti Contracting Co.
410 Consulting Firm, LLC	Gil Berry and Associates	Platinum Consulting Group, LLC
4Tech Solutions, LLC	Global Energy of the Carolinas, LLC	Pretty Lady Logistics, LLC
5x Environmental, LLC	Greenhouse Electrical Professionals, LLC	Prmelabs Testing and Screening, LLC
AB Construction Group, LLC	Gregory's Design Group, LLC	Prism Lighting Services LLC
Ace Environmental Services, LLC	Harris Miller Miller & Hanson, Inc.	Providing Promises, LLC
Acuity Design Group, Inc.	IMEC Group, LLC	Rare Agricultural Products, LLP
Alabama Mechanical Systems & Conveyor, Inc.	Infinity Resources Group, LLC	REV Services, LLC
Allexa of SC-Myrtle Beach, LLC	Integrity Contracting Company, LLC dba Integrity Compliance Consulting	River Street Group, LLC
Amazing Traditions, LLC	Invision Smart Window, LLC	RKlean Contracting, LLC
American Material Services, Inc.	JB-C's Taste of South Louisiana, LLC	SCC Logistics, LLC
Apex Petroleum Corporation	Jeezzy Sourcing, LLC	Seahorse Ventures, LLC dba Seahorse Snacks
Assurance Consulting Engineers, LLC	Jem's Trucking Solution, LLC	Sensis, Inc.
Barnett Trucking, LLC	JNW Trucking, LLC	Seven Lips and Lashes, LLC
Big Ollies & Son Trucking, LLC	JTM Logistics, LLC	Shine Pro Cleaning Company, LLC
Blake Environmental Solutions, LLC	Kingville Farm, LLC	Signet Peridot, LLC
Blu-Bio Solutions, LLC	KJ Backpack, LLC	Solid Mass Construction, LLC
Booker Design Collaborative, LLC	Koppur Trailers and Chassis, LLC	South Sea Construction, LLC
Bracey Expediting, LLC	KSR Steel, LLC	Southeast Allegiance, LLC
Bromack Manufacturing, Inc.	La Vie Home, Inc. dba La Vie Development, Inc.	Spencer Management, LLC
Brosh, LLC	Lamb Professional Solutions, LLC	Sterling Construction Services, Inc.
C Jenkins and Associates, LLC	Landry Consulting, LLC	STIB Commercial Enterprises Group, LLC dba STIB CEG, LLC
Cardinal Survey & Design, PLC	Laser Bridge Industries, LLC	Stratcon Contracting Corp
CBH Excavation, LLC	Let's Get Wasted, LLC	SZ PM Consultants, Inc.
CCTV Master, LLC DBA Environmental Infrastructure Imaging	LJ's Cleaning Solutions, LLC dba LJ's Cleaning Solutions	Tab's Professional Transportation, LLC
CDH Utility Solutions, LLC	M.A. + Associates, LLC	TechSME, LLC
Celestial Freight Solutions, Inc.	Marathon Reprographics Inc. dba MySmartPlans	The Promotion Lady, LLC
Centric Holdings, LLC dba Gupton Land Clearing	Metro Trafrix, LLC	Threadcraft Engineering, Inc.
Construction Recruiters America Staffing, Inc.	Milestone Consulting & Construction, Inc.	Tri-Logistics LLC
Crocus, LLC	Modulus, LLC	Unison Consulting, Inc.
D.T. Read Steel Co., Inc.	Moore Installs, LLC dba Moore Installs, LLC	United Electronics, Inc.
DA Outdoor Solutions, LLC	Mountain View Aggregates, LLC	US ATM Network, Inc. DBA US ATM Network
Destine to Define HomeCare Agency, LLC	Mr. Poppers Kettle Korn & Gourmet Popcorn, LLC	Valancourt International, LLC
Diversity Services, LLC	Natasha's Affordable Cleaning Service, LLC	VamosX, LLC
Dump Brothers Universal Trucking, LLC	Nationwide Traffic Data, LLC	Westbrook Commercial Janitorial Services, LLC
Elite Limo Service, LLC - SBE	NC Spotless Pros Powerwashing	Willamette Technical Fabricators, LLC
Enterprise Rebar, LLC	New Millennium Trucking Company, LLC	Women Express Logistics, LLC
Epic Contractors and Materials, LLC	New Wave Management, LLC	ZBS & Associates, LLC
Epstein Creative, LLC	Noble Specialties, Inc.	Zeus Logistics, LLC
Exousia Marketing Group	Orange Blossom Solutions, LLC	

DBE and ACDBE Final Rule Updates Program Regulations

By Mary Wyeth

In early April 2024 the United States Department of Transportation published program regulation updates after several

years of review and planning. According to USDOT's DBE webpage "the rule updates personal net worth and program size thresholds for inflation; modernizes rules for counting material suppliers" that generally fosters broader participation and streamlines the existing certification process. Visit [USDOT's Office of Civil Rights DBE](#) to learn more.



Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Committee Symposium



Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs staff attended the 2024 Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Council Training Symposium in Atlanta, GA to refresh and hone their knowledge regarding various Civil Rights Programs.

L-R: Sergio Aparicio, Director, Business Development Center; Greg Davis, Division Director; Angela Gordon, Title VI Coordinator; Maria Hugee, DBE Certification Analyst; and Natasha Livingston, Engineering Technician, DBE Technical Assistance and Compliance.

Photo courtesy of Sergio Aparicio.

SCDOT DBE Training: Curb & Gutter, Sidewalk, Driveway, Pedestrian Ramp and Catch Basin Installation

SCDOT's Merritt Vann, Quality Program Manager and Chris Dicks, Quality Management Engineer facilitated a one-day program designed by the SCDOT Construction Office to give contractors an overview of SCDOT standards for construction of and quality control for curbs and gutters, sidewalks, driveways, pedestrian ramps and catch basin installation.

L-R: Merritt Vann, SCDOT; Will McBrafer, TCS TAM Consulting Services; Cornelius Jenkins, Cornelius Concrete, LLC; Markus Corley, Corley Construction LLC; Nestor Reyes Gonzalez, R & G Construction, Inc.; Matthew Corley, Corley Construction and Dagoberto Aguilera, DA Outdoor Solutions, LLC.

Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth



L-R: Heather Thompson and Joe Biggerstaff of B & N Grading, Inc. eagerly waiting for the training to begin!



L-R: Nestor Reyes Gonzales owner of R & G Construction, LLC and Dagoberto Aguilera owner of DA Outdoor Solutions, LLC listen attentively.



L-R: Cornelius Jenkins of Cornelius Concrete, LLC and Nestor Reyes Gonzalez of R & G Construction, LLC network during the break.



L-R: Curtis Webb, Vernon Forrest, Andy Webb and Walter Herrera all of Medina's Hauling seeking value in the training as the company considers expansion.

DBE/SBE Program Outreach



Engineering Technician Ashton Williams, Sr., in DBE Technical Assistance and Compliance delivered a presentation on the benefits of becoming a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firm at the Southeastern Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Procurecon Charleston in June 2024.

Photo courtesy of Ashton Williams



DBE Certification Program Manager, Delicia Wingard was an invited panelist for the South Carolina chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar held in Charleston on July 25th. The DBE panelists answered questions ranging from certification to support services.

L – R: Richard Waring with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, DBE business owner, Heather Robbins with Robbins DeWitt, and SCDOT's Delicia Wingard.

Secretary of Transportation Powell and Momentum 2050

By Mary Wyeth

SCDOT's Secretary of Transportation Justin Powell introduced Momentum 2050 which is focused on the future of transportation in South Carolina. An initial survey was conducted which invited

public participation in launching the development of "a road map for economic prosperity for South Carolina" which will consider the multimodal transportation needs from citizens and stakeholders in both urban, suburban and rural communities according to SOT Powell on the dedicated webpage [Momentum 2050: Moving South Carolina Forward](#). Read more about the plan, FAQs, and how to contact SCDOT to get involved.



Learn More

MOMENTUM 2050
Moving South Carolina Forward

Momentum 2050 is the statewide plan for the future of South Carolina's transportation network. Visit <https://movingsouthcarolinaforward.com> to learn more.



DBEs At Work



DBE Chief Technical Advisor and Compliance Manager James Cooper conducts a Commercial Useful Function (CUF) onsite review with Tile Finishers, Gosalia Concrete Constructors, Inc. on I-126 Eastbound Project CCR-1.

L – R: Rene Arceo and Oscar Munoz, Gosalia; James Cooper, SCDOT; Oscar Hernandez and Luis Martinez, Gosalia.

Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth



L – R: Luis Martinez and Oscar Hernandez, Gosalia Concrete Constructors, Inc., prepare to install expansion material in the concrete barrier.



Crew from Reynolds Fence and Guardrail install new guardrail at I-26 approaching the St. Matthews exit, 119.

**YOUR INPUT
MATTERS TO US!**

We are finalizing a survey so we can hear about your experience reading the Business Curve newsletter. Within the next month, our primary readership will receive an email that includes an access link to the survey. Please take a few minutes (less than five) to complete the short survey and provide us with your feedback on topics you would like us to consider for future issues of the Business Curve.

Thank you!

2024 Summer Intern



Summer Intern, Leila Kelly (front row center) is surrounded by Division of Minority and Small Business Affairs staff pointing out that she's the one!
Photo courtesy of Cody Crouch



Monday morning mini meetings with the summer intern mentor committee provided Leila Kelly with time to discuss and reflect on her experiences and review upcoming opportunities. She navigated a rigorous schedule in each of the division's three units which entailed learning in both office and field settings.

L- R: Leila Kelly, Mary Wyeth, division summer intern program coordinator; Tamyra Berry, mentor in the Office of Civil Rights Programs and Alyssia Glenn, mentor in the Business Development Center and DBE Reporting and Data Management. Not pictured: Natasha Livingston, mentor in DBE Technical Assistance and Compliance.



L - R: Ashton Williams and Leila Kelly learned from SDOT's Resident Construction Engineer (RCE) for Lexington Construction "B" Shawn E. Buchanan, PE about the efficiency of continuous traffic movement resulting from redesigned cloverleaf exits. The RCE also discussed local environmental considerations projects plan for/around, e.g., bird migratory routes and nesting seasons.



CCR RCE, Patrick Stinson, PE, CCM, DBIA of CDM Smith explains the purpose and related process of utilizing rebar/steel reinforcements on bridge steel structures at this CCR1 site along I-26 in Richland County.



L-R: Ashton Williams, DBE Technical Assistance & Compliance Engineering Technician reviews summer intern, Leila Kelly's work as she prepares to assist in an onsite CUF of Reynolds Fence and Guardrail working at the I-26 Exit 119 project with redesigned cloverleaf exit design.
Photos courtesy of Mary Wyeth:



Construction Manager for Carolina Crossroads, David Rogers, PE in the Office of Alternative Delivery gave a Carolina Crossroads (CCR) project update for Summer Intern Leila Kelly who was accompanied by division and human resources staff at the CCR Office on Zimacrest Drive before the entourage embarked on CCR1 and CCR2 site reviews.

2024 Summer Transportation Institute at Benedict College

By Barbara Beagles, Director, Office of Civil Rights Programs



Ms. Barbara Beagles listens intently during a speaker's presentation. Division Director Greg Davis says she is a driving force of the Summer Transportation Institute which is funded by SCDOT and FHWA, and, this year, administered by Benedict College.

Photos courtesy of Dr. Kennard DuBose, STI Project Director, Assistant Professor, Benedict College.

The 2024 Summer Transportation Institute (STI) was held on the campus of Benedict College located in Columbia, South Carolina, from June 3 through June 27, 2024. The program consisted of fifteen (15) students, 9th through 11th grade, representing eleven high schools in South Carolina.

STI, a Federal Highway Administration program initiative, was created to bring awareness of and expose middle and high school students to career opportunities in the transportation industry. South Carolina is considered the “birth

state” of STI because the first program was held on the campus of South Carolina State University in 1993. Since that time, the STI has expanded from a single university to multiple colleges and universities throughout the country.

STI is comprised of three components: academic, enhancement, and sports/recreation. Each component provides a stimulating introduction to the field of transportation, motivates students towards professions in the industry, as well as enhances leadership and teamwork skills. The academic curriculum emphasizes the importance of safety and provides exposure to all modes of transportation including land, air, water, and rail. During the program, students engaged in activities that assisted in gaining unique exposure to the transportation industry. Transportation professionals provided presentations about transportation career options, highway construction projects and safety. Students



Students visited SCDOT's Traffic Management Center for a presentation focused on emergency response procedures and how its State Highway Emergency Program (SHEP) assists motorists whose vehicles are experiencing mechanical problems and provide support and assistance to emergency response teams during incidents.



Students at the Challenger Learning Center of RCS D1 learn about air transportation via flight simulators.

attended field studies at the Challenger Learning Center, the South Carolina Department of Transportation Traffic Management Center, Boeing of South Carolina, Clemson University, Charleston Port Authority, BMW, Honda, and Charleston Railroad Museum. The enhancement component consisted of ACT preparation.

The Culminating Ceremony was held on Thursday, June 27, 2024. Students provided highlights of lessons learned while participating in the STI. The occasion was celebrated by staff, representatives from SCDOT and parents.

STI continues to serve as a mechanism that prepares our future workforce for rewarding careers in the transportation industry.



Engaged students listen and ask questions during the comprehensive and engaging lessons of the ACT/SAT Prep Course designed to help students excel in standardized tests.



Student considers how to solve an engineering problem when attempting to move objects from Point A to Point B as part of a presentation about careers in transportation.



The graduating class feel prepared to explore careers in transportation and STEM related fields.

Local Government: Small Business Opportunities



During the Annual Small Business Week Conference hosted by City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities / Small Business Administration South Carolina District Office in early May, Minority and Small Business Affairs Division Director, Greg Davis participated in the Workshop on Small Business Certifications. Representatives from SCDOT, Richland County Office of Small Business Opportunity, and SMBCC gave overviews of their certification programs and how they can be used to better gain local, state and federal procurements and contracts. Also during the workshop, testimonials of certification successes were given by Lesenta Lewis-Ellis, LLE Construction Group; Karen Jenkins, KRJ Consulting; and Vickey Evans, CORG Management Group.

L-R: Greg Davis, SCDOT; LaSasha Breland, Richland County; Johnny Burch, SMBCC; facilitator, Angela Brewer, SBA.



SCDOT's Director of Engineering Support, Rob Bedenbaugh, P.E. discussing NEVI opportunities with Sabrina and Felix Jacobs of Smart Techniques Electrical Contractors following his presentation at the Richland County Office of Small Business Opportunity (OSBO) Conference: Surge24. The conference was held in Columbia, SC on September 18, 2024.

Photos courtesy of Greg Davis



L - R: Division Director of Minority and Small Business Affairs, Greg Davis and Procurement Chief of Commodities and Services and Procurement Director, Emmett Kirwan represented SCDOT discussing work opportunities with the agency.

TRAINING

2024 FALL/WINTER RECENT AND UPCOMING COURSES

DATE	COURSE
October 2 & December 2	<i>Basic Work Zone</i>
October 3	<i>Growing and Maintaining Your Dump Truck Business</i>
October 3 – 4 & December 16 – 17	<i>Temporary Traffic Control – Design & Supervision</i>
October 15 & December 10	<i>Flagger – Novice</i>
October 15 & December 10	<i>Flagger Instructor Training</i>
October 22	<i>Mastering Business Networking</i>
October 23 - 24	<i>Estimating & Bidding in the Transportation Construction Arena</i>
October 29	<i>Blue Print Reading</i>
October 30	<i>QuickBooks – Job Costing</i>
November 13	<i>Construction Law, Workman Compensation, Insurance and Bonding</i>
November 19 - 20	<i>Effective Business Development & Management</i>
November 21	<i>Top 5 Negotiation Skills to Succeed for DBEs</i>
December 11	<i>HR Training: Employee Relations for Small Businesses, Workshop</i>
Case by Case	<i>Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)</i>
Case by Case	<i>Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO)</i>

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



Phone (803) 737-1717
 Web: <https://www.scdot.org/>