

FDOT Newsletter

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Volume 85



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Building a Website
- Plan Reading



ICYMI: Governor Ron DeSantis Awards \$4 Million for New I-75 Interchange in Ocala, Announces Third Buc-ee's Location in Florida

Today, Governor Ron DeSantis awarded \$4 million to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund to add a new interchange at I-75 and Northwest 49th Street in Marion County. These funds will create new opportunities for the Ocala area by building infrastructure needed to support a new Buc-ee's location, reducing traffic congestion at other Ocala area I-75 interchanges and expanding access to I-75 for two industrial and commercial development complexes and the nearby World Equestrian Center. The new Buc-ee's location is the third to be built in Florida and will consist of an 80,000-square foot travel center, supporting 120 fuel pumps with more than 720 parking spots for visitors. FDOT's infrastructure project is expected to have an economic impact of \$21 million and create 1,500 new jobs. The new interchange will further establish the City of Ocala as a strategic Central Florida hub for freight-related traffic.

"By making strategic investments like today's \$4 million Job Growth Grant Fund Award, Florida will continue to fuel economic growth across the state," **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. "Ocala's ideal location at the center of our state makes it prime for new manufacturing opportunities and for visitors looking for a place to stop and grab some beaver nuggets. I look forward to seeing the opportunities this award will create for Floridians, businesses and communities in Central Florida."

"FDOT is grateful to have a leader like Governor DeSantis who understands the value of investing in infrastructure to serve as an economic engine and prepare Florida for the future," **said FDOT Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E.**

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How Tech Can Help Contractors Win the War for Talent

Modernizing the back office for a competitive advantage
While already fighting to keep up with its typical hiring pace, the construction industry will need to draw more than 500,000 additional workers this year to meet rising demands, according to recent data released by Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC).

It's not an easy task, as contractors are looking to accommodate an 18% projected increase in spending on construction projects while dealing with an unrelenting labor shortage that threatens their ability to complete projects on time and take on new ones. The rapidly dwindling labor pool that continues to vex firms is largely tied to its aging workforce. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the percentage of construction industry workers who are 55 and over has nearly doubled, and as workers retire or leave for other industries, construction firms are scrambling to find replacements while also shoring up their workforce to capture new opportunities.

Construction laborers and skilled workers top their hiring lists, as do professionals on the management, business and financial operations side — a segment that BLS estimates to account for 20% of the construction industry's total workforce.

As firms fight to secure the talent they need amidst the pressures of supply chain shortages, volatile pricing and a potentially looming recession, they need to rethink how they operate in the back office. In doing so, they have a powerful opportunity to increase their efficiencies and mitigate risks while giving employees what they want, and technology plays a part in this equation.

Rethinking the Construction Industry's Back Office

The back office is the hub of operations for firms, as staff in this department are responsible for handling the complex finances of construction. Back-office employees must confirm that contractors and suppliers are accurately paid and properly manage cash flow to ensure business continuity and growth. Yet despite its critical importance, the back office is often overlooked when budgeting for technology.

As a result, processes like navigating invoices or paying bills remain paper-based and inefficient. Employees are tasked with mundane work, such as chasing approvals on invoices, cutting paper checks and following up on outstanding lien waivers. As firms take on more work, so do back-office staff — making manual and burgeoning workloads more taxing and hindering to talent efforts, including retaining staff or attracting new hires.

Automation can help modernize the back office by reducing paper processes while streamlining invoicing and payment routines.

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About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



CEI DBE Supportive Services

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