

Update from SCDOT

After over 40 years of continuously decaying roads and bridges, with little increase in dollars to correct this effort, the SC Legislature approved to raise our gas tax from 16 cents to 28 cents, phased in over a ten year period. The bill was passed in 2016. Since that time, our construction activity has tripled and our CE&I (construction, engineering & inspection) work has quadrupled. As such, SCDOT has done the following since our last symposium:

1. To better meet the growing CE&I need, a more aggressive focus was placed on providing professional DBE firms with technical training and certifications. Many of the training classes were led by vendors who train SCDOT personnel.
2. Instituted the placement of multiple DBE goals on appropriate projects – one goal for construction and an additional goal for professional services.
3. Agency agreed to appoint a Director of DBE Mega Project Support, Compliance and Technical Assistance -- Mr. Gary Linn. Mr. Linn serves as the centralized point-of-contact for all DBE aspects of current and upcoming mega projects. He leads the goal setting process, identifies potential set-aside work (on state funded areas), oversees the outreach events, and facilitates the Good Faith Effort review if necessary.
4. In order to demonstrate support for the DBE community from senior leadership, share details of Agency initiatives, and provide an opportunity for DBE firms to speak to senior leadership, our division organized a “Bridging the Gap” forum. The two-hour session included remarks and presentations from the Secretary/CEO, Chief Engineer, Deputy Director of Finance, Director of Pre-Construction, and the Director of Construction. The event, was held in October 2020 and a follow-up event was held in January 2021.
5. Three outcomes of the Bridging the Gap
 - a. One-on-one DBE presentations to senior leadership similar to what is afforded to large prime contractors.
 - b. A more robust potential plan holders’ list.
 - c. MBE Quote Policy – a new quote policy for \$10-\$25K commodities and services contracts, where three quotes are required. All SCDOT personnel must make a good faith effort to get at least one of the three required quotes from an MBE company.

Mark your Calendars for the upcoming AASHTO Committee on Civil Rights Conference (part of the Agency Administration Conference)

- Anticipating the first week on November 2021
- The host state will be SC (possibly historic Charleston, beaches of Hilton Head or Myrtle Beach, or the mountains of the upstate)
- We’re planning for a hybrid event (in-person and virtual)
- Stay tuned for details