



**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SMALL BUSINESS  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 5, 2013**

**1:00 - 3:30pm**

**Caltrans, District 6 – Fresno Manchester Office  
2015 E. Shields Ave. Ste. 100, Room 148 (Sierra Room)**

**Caltrans, District 10 – Stockton Office  
1976 E. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 3**

**Caltrans, District 6 – Bakersfield Maintenance Office  
1226 Olive Drive, Bakersfield**

**Caltrans Staff Present:**

**Bender Ehlert**, Sharri - District 6 Director  
**Caudle**, Morris – District 6 Small Business Liaison  
**Everson**, Brian - District 6 Division Chief, Central Region PJD/PPM  
**Guinan**, Lori – District 6 Deputy Director, Administration  
**Hanif**, Nabeelah – District 6 A&E Liaison  
**Martinez**, Steven – District 10 Small Business Liaison  
**Mertlik**, Kelly – District 6 Small Business Liaison  
**Nogueira**, Zelig - District 10 Deputy Director, Administration  
**Prandini**, Camillo – District 6 Construction Liaison  
**Pulido**, Lauren – District 10 Chief, Administrative Services  
**Runge**, Pam – District 6 Chief, Administrative Services

**By Phone Conference:**

**Sequeira Smith**, Alicia – Headquarters, OBEO

**Council Members Present:**

**Morris**, Ali – Kern County Black Chamber of Commerce  
**Zabrycki**, Lydia – Quad Knopf

**By Phone Conference:**

**Yu**, Ming-Chen (M.C.) – Asian American Architects and Engineers of Northern California

**Guests in Attendance:**

None

## **Welcome/Introductions/Opening Remarks**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Meeting convened at 1:10 p.m. Welcomed all the attendees during opening remarks. Attendees introduced themselves.

We have Lydia Zabrycki in our office and M.C. Yu on the phone. Alicia Sequeira Smith from OBEO is also on the phone. We do not have a quorum, so we don't have enough people to take a motion on the meeting minutes from the prior meeting. We will see if a few more people show up.

## **Item #1: Recent Caltrans and Statewide Information Update:**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Amarjeet Benipal is in a meeting at Headquarters. He is the acting District 10 Director while Carrie Bowen is on special assignment down in District 7. Amarjeet wanted to be here today, but he had to go to Sacramento for a meeting.

In our District, you can see we started “Orange Tuesday” today. District 10 has been doing it for awhile, but this is our first “Orange Tuesday”. We have been gathering people together and taking photos. The point of it is to show pride in our organization that we are proud to work for Caltrans and doing so by wearing the color orange. It is a morale builder and it is picking up across the state. District 3, District 10 and District 2 have stated doing it along with Caltrans Headquarters.

**Lydia Zabrycki** – Which District started it?

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – I believe it was District 2 in North Region. It has been really exciting and we had a really good turnout today. So, this is something we have initiated in our District now.

At the last Executive Board meeting, the Directors all signed the contract for delivery for this fiscal year, 2013/2014. In District 6, we have \$149.7 million in capital projects that will be going out to construction this fiscal year. It is about 38% higher than last year. That is not necessarily a reflection on revenues going up, but a reflection of what types of projects we got in our District this year. We may have received a few more SHOPP jobs which increased our number. We were at a \$108 million last year and now we are almost at \$150 million this year. We have a total of 23 projects which we will be delivering to construction. Nineteen of those projects are under \$10 million. The vast majority of the projects we are delivering these days are not large dollar amounts, but relatively small projects. This is good when talking about small businesses competing for the work on these projects.

We will take a moment to see who joined us by phone. Ali Morris has called in since the VTC wasn't working in Bakersfield.

Regarding the contract for delivery, we are very heavy in the fourth quarter this year. Eleven of those 23 projects are actually going to be in the last quarter of the fiscal year. This is a trend that is statewide and not just in District 6. Statewide, half of the program is in the fourth quarter. We will be working harder in the coming years to balance that out and not have half of the projects going to construction right when we hit summertime.

There is a new Caltrans report, which is not out yet, but is being developed. Senator DeSaulnier introduced legislation called SB 486. It has not passed yet and we were already in motion on doing this anyway regardless whether the legislation passes or not. It is to look at Caltrans as a transparent organization. We are kind of viewed as not transparent, but I think we are very transparent. We produce about 24 different reports to the

legislature right now. They are complicated and detailed and the reality is that people are not reading these 24 reports. Senator DeSaulnier was looking for something that was a lot more concise, simple and easy to read. The idea actually came from the Washington Department of Transportation, where their approval rating statewide was very low. They had 12% of the population that didn't trust the Washington DOT at the time they initiated their Gray Report. They then developed some reporting performance measures which were easy to understand and easy for the public. We are going down that same path. We are right now developing what those performance measures will be and how we are going to report on them. Lori and I reviewed an early draft and it still needed some work. We want to make it something that people can easily look at. That will be coming out in the future and when it does officially get released, I will make sure I talk about it, so you can go online and look at it. The report will probably be an evolving document that will probably get input and feedback from people and have changes made as we go.

**Zelie Nogueira, District 10 Deputy Director** – As of October 21, 2013, District 10 has currently \$742 million in construction on 36 projects. The CTC meeting, which was held in August and October 2013, over \$59 million in projects were voted for District 10 in allocations and included funding from Prop 1B and various state and federal transportation accounts. These additional projects will continue to create jobs and help grow our local economy. Highlights of the funding for District 10 included in San Joaquin County, a \$1.1 million job for maintenance on a couple of bridges, one on Highway 12 and one on I-5. That project will replace the bearing pads and joint seals which will help maintain and extend the life of the bridges. We also have a \$9.9 million job on State Route 4, which is the Bacon Island Rehabilitation Project to widen and upgrade the roadway intersections, repave areas of distress, and place shoulder and median rumble strips along 12 miles of roadway. These are definitely opportunities for small businesses. Also in San Joaquin County, will be a double track project, which is to construct 3.8 miles of double track, one in each direction, from the city of Escalon to Stockton along the rail. This should improve on-time performance of the intercity rail passenger service on the San Joaquin corridor, which operates from Bakersfield to Oakland and Bakersfield to Sacramento. Then in the city of Modesto on Highway 99, a \$43.8 million job for a Pelandale interchange project, which will reconstruct that interchange and build some auxiliary lanes. This project should alleviate traffic congestion and improve traffic operations, as well as safety in the area. It should accommodate huge traffic in that location. There is also a \$4 million project that will widen Clarabelle Road to two lanes in both directions and add a center left turn lane, construct a bike lane, and bring State Route 108 to Oakdale Road.

**Lydia Zabrycki** – Are those projects being designed in house right now and they are going to be out for construction?

**Zelie Nogueira, District 10 Deputy Director** – These are already out to be advertised.

### **Item #2: Code of Conduct Discussion/Voting:**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – We do not have a quorum yet since we only have three members present. We need to get to four. We won't take any action on it yet. The Code of Conduct was drafted and we talked about at the April 2013 meeting and we decided to go ahead and bring it back to this meeting for a formal vote. We can't do that at this point in time, but if you have the opportunity to look at it, go ahead and do so. It sets some standards on how to conduct meetings and behave during these Small Business Council meetings. This is very similar to what was adopted at the Statewide Small Business Council meeting. We will see if before the end of the meeting we get enough members to bring it back for discussion and vote.

### **Item #3: Office of Business and Economic Opportunity Update:**

**Alicia Sequeira Smith** – The Procurement Fair Guide is in draft form and was sent out to all the liaisons for comment. We didn't get a lot of comments back so we went ahead and finalized the draft. At the next full Statewide Small Business Council meeting, the members will then receive the guide and have a chance to review it and make any comments.

By the end of today, the entire DBE database will be receiving a notice of the DBE Award Tracker by email notification. Everyone should be pretty familiar with this award tracker, since we have talked about it for the last three years. You can track DBE usage as well as DVBE usage of subcontractors. On this particular award tracker, it is updated monthly on the Office Engineer website. We are just putting out a friendly reminder to DBE's letting them know that they can find not only DBE's that are being utilized on contracts that have been awarded, but the percentages and dollar amounts that they are being used for. This is a good way for firms to think they may have been used on a contract or they were initially solicited for a quote from a prime for a specific contract and then they did not get used. This is a good way for them to track that and do their own little background to see what is going on in the contracts.

The Office of Business and Economic Opportunity come January 1, 2014, will be going through reorganization. Roles and responsibilities in this office for contract compliance, costs and determination, Title VI, etc is all going to change. Some of the policies and procedures are going to be changing as well. So, when all of those changes take effect, we will have a new organizational chart and explanations for everybody to help find who they need to go to.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Sounds like the Tracker tool will be good information that's going to be available for everyone.

**Alicia Sequeira Smith** – The Award tracker actually has been out for about three years. It gets updated regularly every month. The past three years we have shared it regularly, but now we are really trying to push it so that people understand that it is out there. It will help clarify a lot too.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Has that link been emailed out? Do we need to get the link and email it out to our members?

**Alicia Sequeira Smith** – The link will be emailed out directly by our DBE Program Manager, Ramon Carlos. It will be emailed out by today. He will be sharing it with all the District Small Business Liaisons in an email as well.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – If our members don't get it, then they can contact Kelly Mertlik.

**Kelly Mertlik** – We can just send it out automatically when we get it from Headquarters. We'll just send it to the members in case they are not DBE's, so they can see how it works.

**M.C. Yu** – Is the link always there?

**Alicia Sequeira Smith** – The link is always there. It has been there for three years. It is on the Contractor's Info Table, the matrix that we have been promoting for a long time. It has all the information of contract awards, DBE firm search, and everything else. Right under the "Awards Section" near the middle of the table is where the Award Tracker is located.

**M.C. Yu** – Is it more for construction or for A&E or both?

**Alicia Sequeira Smith** – It is more for construction because it is put out by Office Engineer and not by the Department of Procurement and Contracts (DPAC). But that is something we have encouraged and Eddy Lau has brought up in the Statewide SBC meetings for DPAC to start doing something similar.

**Item #4: Statewide Small Business Council Update:**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Debbie is not here today. Is there an alternate to do reports for her when she is not here?

**Lydia Zabrycki** – I am the alternate, but she didn't give me anything.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – We will defer that discussion to next time.

**Item #5: District 10 Update:**

**Steven Martinez** – Since the last San Joaquin Valley Small Business Council meeting in April 2013, I was brought into this position and I was able to meet some of the members of the Statewide Small Business Council meeting in July 2013. These few months have been full of activity here.

In August and September 2013, we partnered with the CA High Speed Rail to hold SB and DVBE certification workshops in Modesto and Stockton. There were approximately 25 small businesses combined and 17 became certified at the workshops.

On October 1, 2013, District 10 hosted the Central Region Calmentor A&E Fall Mixer and workshop. The mixer was packed with about 79 small businesses and 15 to 20 Caltrans representatives, including lots of senior staff. We also had five local agencies that were represented.

On October 9, 2013, we partnered with the Stockton Regional Public Agency Consortium and we hosted our first small business event "Get Connected" at the Alex G. Spanos Center at the University of Pacific Campus. There were approximately 43 local and state agencies represented and 120 small businesses in attendance.

We are currently working on having a panel presentation of our local agencies in March 2014 and planning our next "Get Connected" small business event in August or so next year.

**Ali Morris** – Now on the VTC in Bakersfield.

**Item #6: District 6 Update:**

**Morris Caudle** – I will give a brief overview on what we have done since our last meeting. Beginning on August 16, 2013, we had the Ron Brown Business & Economic Summit, which was held by the Metro Black Chamber and held at the Downtown Fresno Radisson Hotel. We participated as a panel member along with Department of General Services (DGS), High Speed Rail (HSR), and the CA Public Utilities Commission.

On August 23, 2013, we attended the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Central California Business Expo, which is held by Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. We shared a table with High Speed Rail, Olivia Fonseca. It was a very well attended event and was held at the Golden Palace off of Ashlan and Hwy 99, in Fresno.

We participated in three “Register Your Business with the State of CA” Workshops partnering with DGS and SCORE. These were on-line certification workshops. One was held at Employment Connection in Visalia on August 29, 2013, another was held at Fresno City Hall on September 10, 2013, and then another at the Fresno Chamber of Commerce on October 29, 2013. We also participated in two “How to Get Contracts and Awards with the State of CA” workshops with DGS and SCORE. These were PowerPoint presentation workshops and they were held at the SBA/SCORE office in Fresno on July 8, 2013 and September 24, 2013.

On September 10, 2013, we had a workshop for Calmentor titled “Frequent Findings & Safe Harbor Rate” presented by Caltrans Audits and Investigations unit. Workshop was held at the Fresno SBA Office and lunch was provided by Calmentor sponsors.

We went to Steven and Lauren’s event on October 1, 2013, for the Central Region Calmentor Mixer held at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Stockton. It was a very well attended event and there was a lot of positive feedback.

We are in discussions with High Speed Rail to do a “Register Your Business with the State of CA” Workshop every month. The workshops will be in the mornings from 9:00 a.m. to noon. We have yet to finalize dates, but will update our District 6 Small Business website with that information when it is available. We are working with the Department of General Services and SCORE to do presentations on “How to Get Contracts and Awards with the State of CA”. This is an accompanying workshop to follow up with the certification workshop to assist people now certified on where to go and how to market their companies.

#### **Item #7: Subcommittee Updates:**

##### **Construction Subcommittee:**

**Camillo Prandini** – In Central Region, we have 132 contracts going on valued at \$1.75 billion. District 6 has 42 of those valued at \$542 million and District 10 has 37 contracts valued at \$745 million. If you travel up and down Hwy 99 you will see all of the projects there. The projects in District 10 are going very well as they are in District 6. We opened up the west-bound Hwy180 braided ramps this last weekend. The Hwy 99/High Speed Rail realignment is going to be a Contract Manager General Contractor (CMGC) item. The RFQ’s are being advertised.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Yes, the RFQ is out and is due later this month. For those that don’t know, the CMGC is a piloted program where Caltrans is looking at a different delivery method, like when we did the ten Design-Build projects in the state. With CMGC, there are six projects statewide. District 6 has one, and District 10 also has a CMGC project. Ours is the first one to go out for SOQ for the realignment of Hwy 99. The process still has Caltrans doing the design work as the primary designer, but we hire a contractor to come in while we are doing the design to assess constructability and give us some ideas on how to do this more effectively. The District 10 CMGC project is the Ferguson Slide Restoration project and it is not nearly as close to going to construction or design. They haven’t finished the environmental work yet.

**Ali Morris** – Who is the contractor they have chosen for the District 6 CMGC project?

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – They haven’t been chosen yet. The Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) is out right now. I don’t know who’s pulled plans.

**Lydia Zabrycki** – When is that due (the RFQ)?

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – I believe it is around November 14, 2013.

**Ali Morris** – When they chose the contractor, are they going to be under all the guidelines, rules and regulations of the high speed rail project?

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Yes. What we have done is coordinated with High Speed Rail on what their requirements are on the project. Because this is essentially their project, we are trying to mirror what they are doing on the high speed rail as far as their goals and requirements for the whole project. The actual contract to do the construction work hasn't been developed yet, but that will have all those criteria in there. Right now, it is just to bring the contractor in through the design process. We are not actually building anything yet.

**Ali Morris** – In the area of goals that Caltrans is trying to achieve, sometimes they are a little more ambitious than others. If there is a situation where Caltrans' goals are more ambitious than the High Speed Rail's goals, which one will you go with?

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – High Speed Rail's goals are more ambitious than Caltrans' goals. Right now, the only project we are using High Speed Rail's goals on is the High Speed Rail realignment of Hwy 99, which Caltrans is doing. We have our own set of parameters for goals and DBE's that we are using and it is a lower standard than what HSR is using.

**Camillo Prandini** – Going back to the Award Tracker that Alicia was speaking about. In addition, on that Contractor webpage is post bid documents. If you want to see if you were listed with that contractor where they are seeking multiple bids, you can see who they actually list. You can find all of their bid documents and their DBE and DVBE participation documents on that website also.

#### **Commodities Subcommittee:**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – Desiree is not here today. The subcommittee is not actively meeting right now.

#### **A&E Subcommittee:**

**Lydia Zabrycki** – Our committee group met and discussed what we want to get out of our group. We will be talking to Nabeelah after the meeting to discuss further and then report back to everyone.

#### **Item #8: Member Items:**

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** – No comment from members. No member items to discuss.

#### **Item #9: Public Comment/Good of the Order:**

No comments.

#### **Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director:**

#### **Action Items proposed at this meeting:**

- Carry over Code of Conduct issue over from the April 2013 meeting. Didn't have the needed minimum of four members to vote at this meeting. Will bring back the issue at the next council meeting in 2014.

- Email out the link to the Award Tracker on the Office Engineer website. (**Completed** on November 21, 2013, when email and link was sent to members)
- Outcome of A&E Subcommittee meeting and bring topics back to next meeting.
- Send out upcoming District 6 outreach workshops, etc (what next after certification) to members.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** –The 2014 meeting schedule has not been determined and Kelly will be working on putting that together to send out early next year. The schedule will be similar to this year’s schedule with the combined meeting (Statewide SBC) in July and then three other meetings.

Are there any items or ideas that anybody wants to bring to this meeting or see as a presenter or specialty expert?

**Ali Morris** – Earlier I heard Morris speak about the next phase of the outreach efforts and I work with the SBDC in town. They are giving different workshops on signing people up as DBE’s, but at the last meeting there was a request to start doing something for people that are signed up to the next level. It is a big request in this area. We have people signed up and I am personally being asked on what we can do now that we are certified. I can get the word out on any upcoming schedules of outreach. Also, there are a lot of things going on, so any missed meetings are not due to lack of commitment or lack of interest. We are happy this is going on and want to continue to be a part of it.

**Sharri Bender Ehlert, District 6 Director** –Add Ali’s request for information on upcoming outreach (what next after certification) to the “Action Items”.

Adjourn: 1:46 p.m. No quorum for a motion.

**Adjourned** – The next meeting will be in early 2014 once the schedule is determined.

**Approved by:**

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**SHARRI BENDER EHLERT, Chair**  
**District 6 Director**  
**California Department of Transportation**

**Approved by:**

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**ZELIE NOGUEIRA, Acting Chair**  
**District 10 Deputy Director, Administration**  
**California Department of Transportation**