



DBE Fastrac

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICE

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TDOT CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICE

Small Business Development Program
505 Deaderick Street, Suite 1800
James K. Polk Building
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
615-741-3681 or 888-370-3647

John C. Schroer

Commissioner of Transportation

Deborah Luter

Civil Rights Office Director

Elizabeth Michael

Small Business Development Program
Director

DBE Supportive Services

Tyler Construction Engineers, P.C.
888-385-9022
DBE Supportive Services

During These Uncertain Federal Funding Times, Should a Joint Venture Be in Your Future?

As a small business, you continually try your best to remain on course and remain “steady as she goes” throughout the year.

But as the Tennessee Department of Transportation continues to face uncertainty about future federal funding, this can sometimes prove difficult at best. In August 2014, Congress passed a stopgap measure in the way of a bill that will keep the federal government’s Highway Trust Fund whole through May 2015. In the meantime, TDOT has pressed the pause button on some of the work it had planned. In October 2014, TDOT **delayed \$400 million in road projects** that were supposed to be completed by Sept. 30, 2015. (<http://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/blog/2014/12/tdot-chief-dont-expect-new-projects-in-next-budget.html>)

As project funding dries up, one potential small business solution in this time of uncertain future federal-aid funding may be to create joint venture opportunities with other small businesses. A joint venture is commonly when two or more businesses enter into a temporary partnership, usually associated with a specific contract or product, that is mutually beneficial to both businesses.

Some questions to consider concerning a joint venture:

- What might I get out of a joint venture?
- What might I have to give up while in a joint venture?
- How does this joint venture position me for the future?
- Are the terms fair or does one business have the upper hand?

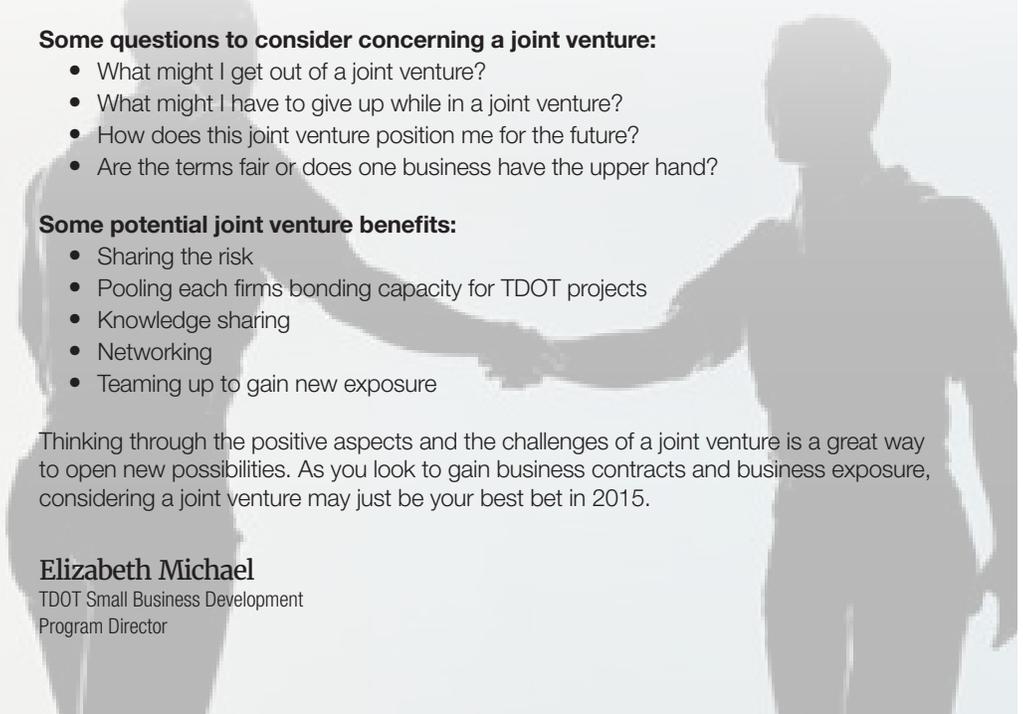
Some potential joint venture benefits:

- Sharing the risk
- Pooling each firms bonding capacity for TDOT projects
- Knowledge sharing
- Networking
- Teaming up to gain new exposure

Thinking through the positive aspects and the challenges of a joint venture is a great way to open new possibilities. As you look to gain business contracts and business exposure, considering a joint venture may just be your best bet in 2015.

Elizabeth Michael

TDOT Small Business Development
Program Director





“FHWA Approves TDOT 2015-2017 DBE Goal Methodology”



In order to receive federal funding, each state DOT must present the Federal Highway Administration a justified rationale for the percentage of construction contracts anticipated to be performed by DBEs throughout the year. The goal must conform to goal submission requirements as outlined in 49 CFR 26 and will remain in effect for three years. We are pleased to announce that FHWA has recently accepted TDOT’s submission of 8.05% for the 2015-2017 federal fiscal years. This goal is an increase from the present goal of 7.60% which has been in place from 2012 -2014. The 8.05% goal consists of two parts: 6.54% is expected to come from race-conscious participation (projects with goals attached), while the remaining 1.51% is expected to come from race-neutral participation (non-goal projects).

In order to arrive at this figure, TDOT used information from the DBE Prequalified Directory, the Governor’s Office of Diversity Business Enterprise (GoDBE) Directory and Census Bureau data to determine ready, willing and able firms. This resulted in an initial baseline figure of 8.32%. The Small Business Development Office then reviewed the last five years of DBE usage to establish the median past participation of DBEs on federal projects, which was 7.78%. These two figures were then averaged to achieve the new goal of 8.05%.

We are pleased that we could offer the increased opportunities to our DBEs with this new and slightly higher goal, and look forward to many new DBEs receiving contracts in the next three years. If you have further questions about the new DBE goal at TDOT, please do not hesitate to contact the Small Business Development Office at 615-741-3681 or Toll Free at 888-370-3647.

DBE Supportive Services Team
DBE_supportive_services@tyler-engineers.com





DBE Profiles



Susan Dakak
Owner/Operator



Susan Dakak Intuitive Technologies, Inc.

Pipeline Inspections and Underwater Bridge Inspections. Knoxville Tennessee

Intuitive Technologies, Inc., a full service, certified women-owned business enterprise, provides all services required for comprehensive pipeline system evaluations. As a provider of environmental assessments and technical stormwater and sewer evaluations, ITI has been in business since 1995. The company is fiscally conservative, debt-free and operates with a low overhead so that it can provide clients with cost-effective services at the highest quality.

ITI has the resources and personnel to effectively manage and conduct the performance analysis required for successful Storm pipe System Evaluation Survey (SSES) projects through a unique, systematic approach utilizing quality-controlled tasks. The focus of their methodology is to perform targeted SSES work so that their clients manage their systems efficiently while maximizing their benefits.

Video Inspection is utilized by ITI to inspect storm sewer lines to identify types of defects in the lines, any blockages and/or structural integrities of pipes, and to identify any other deficiencies in the pipe system. CCTV Inspection is the most effective way to identify any real or potential problems and helps in making an informed decision on what type of solution should be implemented to fix these problems. The use of video in essence eliminates any guess work in resolving sewer problems.

Intuitive Technologies, Inc. also provides underwater bridge Inspections by using sound waves for underwater location and detection. The use of sonar provides high-resolution imagery and is not affected by water conditions. This method also provides digital documentation, can be easily catalogued, and is cost effective.

Susan Dakak, Owner/Operator of Intuitive Technologies, Inc. graduated from Tennessee Technological University with a Civil Engineering degree and has more than 30 years of experience in the field. She has served as a technical advisor for pipeline rehabilitation projects for municipalities throughout the southeastern United States. Ms. Dakak utilizes unique technologies to solve stormwater flooding problems and participates in national and regional professional conferences. She has also given talks about new methodologies such as pipe bursting and cured-in-place lining.

For more information about Intuitive Technologies, Inc. please visit www.Intuitive-tv.com or call their office at 865.250.0821.





DBE Profiles



Laurel Patrick
CEO

Laurel Patrick First Place Finish, Inc.

Founded in 2006 and based in Oak Ridge, TN, First Place Finish Inc. (FPF) is a woman-owned construction business that services TDOT clients with temporary traffic control and permanent signage. Additionally, FPF has performed as a parks and recreation contractor for municipalities and commercial clients installing playgrounds, greenways, pavilions, prefabricated restrooms, & site amenities. FPF offers a value of self-performed services as they are licensed and bonded as a building, mechanical & electrical contractor within Tennessee; TDOT prequalified; TNUCP certified; and SBA certified as an Economically Disadvantaged Woman Owned Small Business (EDWOSB).

FPF proudly accomplishes each project with prompt and decisive attention to details. Timelines are carefully managed and clear communication is delivered from conception to completion in order to provide value to each client. Laurel Patrick, who started the business and is a Civil Engineer by training, states that "In an industry that is often known for inefficiencies and poor organization, our crew has been well received as a fresh look by both owners and other contractors."

CONTACT INFO:
First Place Finish
www.firstplacefinish.us
Office: 865-482-1959
Email at: info@firstplacefinish.us



Shane Marsh
Project Manager



Misty Caldwell
Office Administrator





Do You Know How to Make a Profit?



Believe it or not, the economy is steadily roaring back.

It's interesting to me to see some small firms beginning to make money while others still struggle. As a management consultant to the engineering and construction industry, I have received countless phone calls from owners wanting my advice on whether they should lower their prices to get new work. They tell me that when they do yield to the pressure of lowering their prices to get work, the lower prices still don't attract enough new work. Their next question to me is, "What can I do to get more work without giving up my profits?"

Before I answer their question I ask a few questions myself. "What is your monthly overhead cost? What's your break-even revenue target? What's your average job size, and how many jobs do you bid versus jobs awarded? Do you know how to accurately calculate your markup rates?" Over the years I would say 99.99% of the time these businesses have no clue about what I'm asking.

Victor C. Tyler, P.E.
Program Manager
Construction Business Specialist

Here are a few suggestions for making money:

- **Everyone has costs they can cut out of their business.** I can go in any company and look at the financials and in a day or so find hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars of expenses that could be reduced. Review your financials weekly.
- **Be profit driven.** You have to focus on why you're in business. It's "to make a profit." Shed the guilt. In order to know if you're making a reasonable profit you must know, understand and control your costs first. There are costs that can be reduced ... now. Review your financials weekly.
- **Find profitable work.** It is more fruitful to focus on the front-end of a project, the estimating and bidding portion and extend more time and effort on locating higher profit and smaller scope work, than to focus on over-managing a tight budget during actual work. Bid profitable work only.
- **Believe in your business.** Start with thinking and believing you can make money no matter what. You wouldn't believe how many people don't believe they can make money in this industry. Guess what? Anyone who believes they CAN'T do well, probably will not do well.
- **Build a brand.** Brand names always get paid more. Yes, even for a small business.
- **Increase your prices.** Higher prices come from being focused on a niche, and being the go-to firm that does what you do. This goes hand in hand with marketing and having really good people on your team.
- **Be willing to say "NO"** Be brave and confident in your initial reaction to say you shouldn't do something. Whether it's bad clients, non-paying clients or bad projects, you don't want any of them. You have to sometimes say "no" or it will lead to disaster.
- **Be willing to say "YES"** Be brave and confident in yourself to do things you have never done before.

This is how you grow and develop new scopes and expertise. Growth is related to profitability. Consider this: Would you rather make 10 percent profit on \$100,000 in revenue or 10 percent on \$1 million?

So there you have it. Of course this is a small list from my many years of consulting with small businesses in the engineering and construction industry. Maybe someday, you'll call me on how to increase your bottom line. Or you can attend a number of our upcoming workshops. Until then... Much Success!



Employee Performance Evaluation – Rethinking The Process

I can recall my days in Corporate America when it was time to complete the dreaded employee performance evaluations (EPE). Looking back, it seems sad to think of such an important opportunity to communicate with my staff as something dreadful, but as a leader you “kinda sorta” know how each EPE is going to turn out. And when it comes to evaluating staff, I assure you I was not alone in this thinking.

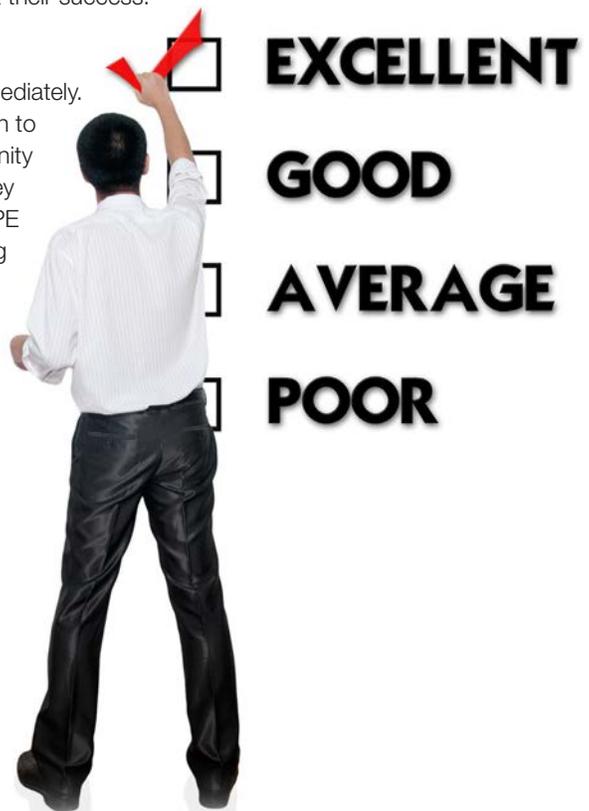
But as I grew as a leader and gained more experience, I realized that the EPE is actually the last of many steps in evaluating your staff. The EPE actually begins with the hiring process. The individual selected must be qualified and have the necessary skills to perform his/her specific job responsibilities. Here is where you, as a leader, make known your performance expectations and how each job within your company is important to its overall success. I always made a point to ask a new hire if he/she understands each requirement and if they have any questions prior to starting the new job.

The next step in the EPE process is the interim review. I usually meet with new hires after approximately six to eight weeks on the job. This is an excellent opportunity for you to listen to the employee’s concerns regarding their job responsibilities, for you to clarify performance expectations, and for both of you to develop a highly engaged supervisor/employee relationship. It is important for employees to know that you, as leader, genuinely care about their success.

If an employee identifies any people, systems and/or processes that may adversely affect their performance, those things should be addressed immediately. Encourage the employee to provide feedback regarding a possible solution to those performance concerns. Many times we use the EPE as our opportunity to tell the employee everything they are doing wrong, or areas in which they need to improve. Don’t get me wrong, this is an important aspect of an EPE but it should not overshadow the positive things we should also be sharing with our employees, with regards to how they add value to your company and for thanking them for all that they do!

Now you and your employee are ready to have a very productive EPE.

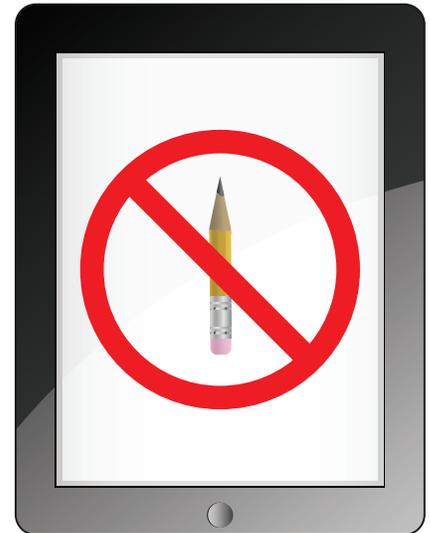
Marshall Tabb
Financial Management & Leadership Coaching





Utilizing The Right Apps!

Can Save Both Time & Money



The technology side of the accounting industry is rapidly changing and expanding. Literally hundreds, if not thousands, of new companies and new software applications have sprung up to help small businesses automate their processes in order to save both time and money. The best way to profit from all of this innovation is to first identify where you can best use technology in your business. Here are three places to look:

Paper Chase

What business tasks are you still using pen and paper or a spreadsheet for? Look at what is on your desk or in your filing cabinet in the form of paper, and that could be your next opportunity for automation. For example, are you still hand-writing checks? There's an app (or two) for that.

Sticky notes and to do lists have been replaced with Evernote or NoteOne. Business cards you collect can go in a CRM (customer relationship manager). All of your accounting invoices and bills can be digitized and stored online. Make a list of all the manual and paper processes you do every day and look for an app that can make the task faster for you.

Fill the Gap

Take stock of what systems you already have in place. The opportunity to fill the gap is where you might have systems that should talk to each other but don't. If you need to enter data into two different places, there may be a chance to automate and/or integrate the systems or data. For example, estimating and job costing or billing systems should integrate well with your accounting system. A few other examples include accounting and payroll; CRM and accounting; inventory and accounting; project management and time tracking; and time tracking and payroll. The more your systems integrate and work as a suite, the better.

Mismatched

It could be you have your systems automated, but the systems are not the best choice for your business requirements. If your systems don't meet many of your business requirements, it may be time to look for an upgrade or a replacement.

If you are performing a lot of data manipulation in Excel or Access, this might also signal that your systems are falling short of your current needs. Look where that's happening and you will have identified an opportunity for improvement. Look in these three areas in your business, and I bet you'll not only find an app for that, you'll also find some freed up time and money once you automate.

Jay B. Mercer

QuickBooks Pro-Advisor & Tax Specialist



The Small Business Development Program Welcomes a New Team Member

BARBARA BOOKER



The Civil Rights Office is pleased to announce and welcome Ms. Barbara Booker to the Small Business Program. Many of you may have already worked with Barbara in TDOT's Civil Rights Office Affirmative Action (AA) Program. She was recently promoted from the AA Program to the Small Business Development Program (SBDP) as a Contract Compliance Officer 3.

For the past four years as a Contract Compliance Officer in the AA Program, Barbara worked with TDOT contractors and subcontractors on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance matters, worked with the OJT Program, as well as on the yearly EEO contractor reporting of Form FHWA 1391.

Barbara is a Veteran of the US Army and is a native of Columbia TN. She also holds a graduate degree from Regis University.

In the SBDP, Barbara is now tasked with DBE contract compliance. She will also coordinate with DBEs on the DBE Interested Parties List and the pre-letting document posted on the Construction website. Other duties include monitoring and enforcing DBE participation and compliance using the CUF checklist, as well as monitoring to ensure contract goals are met by TDOT prime contractors.

Ms. Booker is available at 615-253-1069
toll free at 888-370-3647
e-mail at Barbara.Booker@tn.gov



Workshop Announcement

How to Deal Effectively With Difficult Employee Problems

Effective Coaching/Counseling Tools and Techniques



Location: 2 International Plaza (Gold Building on Briley Prkwy) **Nashville, TN**

Date: February 24, 2015 Time: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

Provider: TDOT Civil Rights Office - DBE Supportive Services
Presenter: Teresa Daniel, PHR, Human Resources Consultant
Tyler Construction Engineers, P.C.

Topic(s): Managing Employees • Disciplinary Policies • Coaching/Counseling • Documentation

Who Should Attend? Business Owners & Managers
No cost to attend. Register early. Limited seating for the Nashville location

On any given day business owners and managers can spend up to approximately 80% of their time dealing with problem employees. Of course, this can have a critical impact on the day to day operations, business development, and overall business growth.

In this session we will review and discuss tools and techniques that business owners and managers can utilize to effectively manage employees in the workplace by addressing:

Inappropriate Behavior • Misconduct • Poor Employee Performance • Poor Attendance • Tardiness

Don't allow difficult employees to drain positive morale and productivity from your business. Join us to learn how to develop a plan to manage your employees by implementing and addressing the legal aspects of appropriate policies on disciplinary procedures. Also we will explore techniques and tools on how to set clear expectations, address issues timely, coaching/ counseling, and appropriate documentation.

If you are a TDOT-Certified DBE, this seminar can also be scheduled for presentation in your firm. Our consultants will work directly with you to evaluate and benchmark your needs.

Please call 615.469.5398 or email for details: DBE_Supportive_Services@tyler-engineers.com.



Roundtable Symposium Announcement:

THE BUSINESS OF DOING BUSINESS... TOPICS THAT MATTER MOST BUT ARE RARELY DISCUSSED

"The small business discussion you don't want to miss!"

DATE: March 17, 2015 TIME: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
(lunch included)

LOCATION: Harvey P. Gassaway Building, Building #4251. 612 Hangar Lane, Nashville, TN 37217

If you could hear a discussion about the things that many business owners overlook, AND learn strategic business tips from successful business owners and strategic business consultants, would you be interested?

The current economy has many small business owners feeling optimistic about the upcoming year. Lately, we have witnessed a recovering small business market and many of these businesses are finding opportunities to grow and prosper. As a strategic small business consultant group, we see many differing business practices in those that we work with. But what is important to you is...What are we seeing the successful and profitable business decision makers talking about and doing?

Each business owner has their idea of what success looks and feels like, and it may not always be about the bottom-line number. The entrepreneur in all of us wants to know the traits of the successful businesses. One of the key question is, "Are YOU profitable?"

Since consistently earning a profit is every company's goal, we thought a closer examination of the business habits of successful businesses could help any business-owner improve their financial strength.

Our newest seminar, "The Business of Doing Business," is a roundtable discussion of insights from a diverse team of speakers, including business owners and management consultants with extensive experience working with small business owners. The conversation comes from an owner's perspective (inside/out) and a consultant's perspective (outside/in), with you, the audience, having a chance to ask specific questions.

Also you'll have an opportunity to sit in on a one-on-one session with panel members and consultants to have a more direct dialog about how to apply and use the information presented. This roundtable seminar is the most impactful four hours you can spend learning to accelerate your career and your business.

Topics discussed:

- What it means to be a successful business owner
- Key steps in building an effective plan
- A clear, and straight forward approach for business growth
- Hiring and retaining your key employees
- How to make a profit
- How to become relevant in your market
- Open discussion roundtable

Who should attend?

- Presidents, CEOs, CFOs, COOs and owners of small businesses
- Experienced managers looking to enhance their knowledge
- Small Business Advocates
- Local and state small business liaisons
- Project Managers and senior technical staff
- Anyone who aspires to become a business owner
- Current and future business leaders

Look for additional information about this exciting symposium in the coming weeks!

Hosted by Tennessee Department of Transportation Civil Rights Office Small Business Development Program, DBE Supportive Services and Tyler Construction Engineers, P.C.



Welcome

New DBEs

Region 1

N/A

Region 2

N/A

Region 3

Civil Infrastructure Associates, LLC

Linda Sullivan

Civil Engineering Consulting Services, Surveying and Drafting

Impact Window Systems, LLC

Ana M. Fernandez

Glass and Glazing Systems Integrator

One Erosion Control & Stabilization, Inc.

Kelsea D. Friend

Erosion Control-Installation of Sediment Barriers Including Silt Fence and Various Other Stabilization Methods

Williams Group Enterprises, LLC

Marqueze Williams

Real Estate Brokerage Firm, Real Estate Development and Property Management

Xtreme Solutions

Corey Gray

Janitorial Services

Region 4

A-1 Electrical Contractors, Inc.

Willie Frazier

Electrical Contractors and Electrical Utility Installation-Installing and Servicing Electrical Wiring and Equipment in Commercial and Industrial Locations

Creative Landscaping

Michael Sowell

Landscaping, Erosion Control and Site Preparation

Recently Renewed Firms

Region 1

Dykes Trucking, Inc.

Kim Dykes

Asphalt & Bridge Deck Sealing, Concrete Flatwork, Milling, General Freight Trucking (Local), Erosion Control, Traffic Control

G & G Steel Placement

Elvia V. Palacios

Steel Placement for Concrete Structures

Lynn Sanford Construction, Inc.

Mary L. Forrester

General Construction Contractor, Hydro-seeding, Landscaping, Sodding, Seeding and Erosion Control, Weatherization, Tie Rebar, Concrete Construction (Flatwork, Pour and Form), Precast Beams and Beam Erection, Site Preparation, Traffic Control, Hauling (Local), Utilities, Pavement Marking/Crack Sealing (Airports)

Planet, Inc.

Janet M. Manuel

Commercial Painting and Sandblasting

Region 2

Development & Environmental Planning Associates, LLC

Tina M. Burgess

Environmental and Ecological Consulting

Region 3

CD Steger Construction, Inc.

Cliff Steger

General Construction

J. R. Construction

Patricia Robertson

Sidewalks, Curbs, Gutters and Driveways, Concrete Contractors, Poured Concrete Foundation and Structure Contractors, Structural Steel and Precast Concrete Contractors

R & M Contractors, Inc.

Robert Crutchfield

Underground Utilities, Drilling, Blasting

Water Quality & Erosion Control of TN

Jean Matthews

Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction, and Landscaping Services

Region 4

Better Backflow Testing, Inc.

Greg Taylor

Electrical Contractor, HVAC, Commercial and Residential Plumbing Contractor and Backflow Testing, General Contractor, Landscaping Services

Powers Hill Design, LLC

Nisha Powers

Civil Engineering Design and Consulting Services

Self Tucker & Architects, Inc.

Juan R. Self

Architecture, Interior Design, Master Planning

Wendy Goldstein Design

Wendy Goldstein

Graphic Design Services



Scheduled Letting Dates 2015

Feb 13	Aug 28
Mar 27	Oct 16
May 15	Nov 13
July 10	(mowing & litter removal)
	Dec 4

TDOT DBE Supportive Services

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

- Business Planning
- Financial Analysis
- Leadership Development
- Business Coaching

ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING

- Strategic Marketing
- Accounting Software
- Construction Accounting
- Bidding & Estimating
- Project Management
- Contracts & Specifications
- Construction Plan Reading
- Project Controls

“Experience tells you what to do; confidence allows you to do it.”

– Stan Smith

Civil Rights Office Small Business Development Program Team

Deborah Luter

Deborah.Luter@tn.gov
Director of the Civil Rights Office

Elizabeth Michael

Elizabeth.Michael@tn.gov
Director of the Small Business Development Program

David Neese

David.Neese@tn.gov
Small Business Development Coordinator/Bond Guarantee Program Manager

Stephanie Brooks

Stephanie.Brooks@tn.gov
Contract Compliance Officer

Sherri Mays

Sherri.Mays@tn.gov
Contract Compliance Officer

Barbara Booker

Barbara.Booker@tn.gov
Contract Compliance Officer

Ross Webb

Ross.H.Webb@tn.gov
Contract Compliance Officer

Phone: 615.741.3681 or Toll Free: 1.888.370.3647

DBE Supportive Services Team

T Y L E R

Construction Engineers, P.C.
cost consultants | estimators | management consultant

810 Dominican Drive, 3rd Floor
Nashville, TN 37228

Phone: 615.469.5398
Toll free: 888.385.9022

DBE_supportive_services@tyler-engineers.com

Victor C. Tyler, P.E.

Program Manager - Construction
Business Specialist
victor@tyler-engineers.com

Curtis Webb

Strategic Marketing & Business Specialist
curtis@curtiswebb.com

Jay B. Mercer

QuickBooks Pro-Advisor & Tax Specialist
jay@j-merc.com

Marshall Tabb

Financial Management & Leadership
Coaching
pa_tabb2@yahoo.com

Sandra T. Webb

Accounting Software Trainer
sandra818@aol.com

Ericka L. Hayes, CPA

Accounting - Business Organization
& Information Technology
erickalhayes@gmail.com

Marie Y. Williams

Human Resource & Leadership Coaching
mywilliams777@att.net

Teresa Daniel, PHR

Human Resource Specialist
tcdphr@comcast.net