

Minority and Women-owned Business Involvement Hits New Record for WCPSS School Construction

Minority and women-owned business enterprise (MWBE) participation on school construction projects has jumped 10 percent over a two year period. With the recent completion of the new River Bend Elementary School, MWBE participation was 39 percent—a record for WCPSS school construction projects.

"This is a great accomplishment and directly correlates with our department's goals of inclusion and diversity on our construction projects," said Tammie Hall, WCPSS Facilities Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise Manager. "The work of the team lead by Clint Council, Project Manager, made this project a huge success."

In 2006, the Wake County Board of Education awarded a \$21.7M Construction Management At Risk contract to Barnhill Contracting for completion of River Bend Elementary. Barnhill Contracting worked with WCPSS Facilities Design and Construction to ensure it was meeting diversity goals and was successful in recruiting 24 different MWBE firms during the project. The 39 percent minority and women-owned business enterprise participation for River Bend construction surpasses all other WCPSS facilities projects to date in addition to the required 10 percent goal mandated by board policy and the state.

"Barnhill has raised the bar for construction manager firms within the area," said Assistant Superintendent for Facilities Joe Desormeaux.

According to John Muter, Vice President of Operations at Barnhill Contracting, providing opportunities for small locally-owned MWBE firms is a corporate philosophy embraced by their company and takes a team effort to achieve. "We work hard on our MWBE program, but to exceed goals, we need help and support from our owners. Our relationship with WCPSS has allowed us to work in concert with staff to learn about MWBE capacity and methods for outreach," he said.

The minority business program is charged with identifying and recruiting minority contractors to work on school construction projects. As MBE Manager, Hall leads the program which has responsibility for compliance and adherence to school board policy 7260. The policy aligns with NC general statutes that set a goal at 10 percent minority participation on construction projects. For more information on WCPSS MWBE Program contact Tammie Hall, 919-856-8179 or thall@wcpss.net.

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