

# Opportunity downtown at construction command center

BY BEVERLY BOBB, PROJECT MANAGER, OPPORTUNITY DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS AT LOWER MANHATTAN CONSTRUCTION COMMAND CENTER

Civil rights leader, Whitney Moore Young, Jr once said "It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one, than to have an opportunity and not be prepared."

In an effort to help minority and women owned businesses prepare for contracting opportunities, the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC) who's Executive Director is Bob Harvey, runs a program called Opportunity Downtown. The LMCCC is charged with coordination and general oversight of all Lower Manhattan construction projects worth more than \$25 million, south of Canal Street. The LMCCC is currently tracking more than 190 projects. *Opportunity Downtown* ensures that minorities and women have access to employment and contracting opportunities that are created as part of the downtown rebuilding effort.

The program has three primary goals: to alert minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) to contracting and subcontracting opportunities associated with downtown construction; to connect interested individuals -- mi-

norities, women, and veterans returning from war -- with available jobs; and to monitor for and guard against discrimination or harassment on construction job sites.

To ensure we achieve these goals, we selected two Consulting Teams to assist us in developing a comprehensive M/WBE program for Lower Manhattan:

Jamaica Business Resource Center (JBRC) /Bradford Team, and Crescent Consulting/DGS Consulting LLC/Carol Garvin Consultants.

With the help of our consulting teams, LMCCC hosted "How to Do Business in Lower Manhattan," a conference attended by over 300 people, at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The goal of the conference was to bring together major public and private stakeholders involved in the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan with leading minority and women-owned business.

One of the many highlights of the



conference was the signing ceremony with Empire State Development Corp, then Lt. Governor David Paterson, Jamaica Business Resource Center and the Surety & Fidelity Association of America, to create a Memorandum of Understanding that created a pilot program open to 30 certified M/WBEs to improve access to

bonding and training.

A second highlight of the conference was M/WBE firms were able to set up one-on-one face time with major construction management companies, general contractors, trade contractors and individuals that will be responsible for rebuilding and revitalizing Lower Manhattan.

Finally, the conference provided panel discussions delivered by leading experts in the financing and surety industry along with members from various state and city agencies.

LMCCC also serves on the planning committee for The Competitive Edge, a consortium of public and private partners working to increase the roster of qualified Disadvantaged, Minority, and Women-owned Business Enterprises (D/M/WBEs) and create procurement and contracting opportunities for qualified firms. Last year, LMCCC played a key role in the success of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Competitive Edge Conference.

Businesses are now facing challeng-

ing economic times. The Opportunity Downtown Program is working to make sure minority businesses are prepared for any opportunities that are available. This year, we will begin our series of Professional Workshops which will focus on up to date topics that affect today's minority businesses

Professional Workshop Series:

LEED: Beginner, Intermediate and advanced classes

Marketing: How to Market your company and network, the importance of Branding, Sampling of Business Cards, Stationary, Websites, Graphics, and Brochures.

Access to Financing: How to apply for lines of credit, Bonding, Start-Up Capital

Insurance: The importance of all types of Insurance, Business, Professional, Disability, Workers Comp, Unemployment

Networking, Minority and Women businesses doing business with each other

Doing business with the Developers in Downtown Manhattan. Bringing the Procurement directors of the Developers and Construction Managers to meet and discuss their projects with Minority and Women business

We continuously meet with community groups in order to assess best practices and to enhance our diversity committee. To be successful, the *Opportunity Downtown Program* requires the support and collaboration of our public and private partners. If you would like information on any upcoming events, please feel free to visit our website [www.lowermanhattan.info](http://www.lowermanhattan.info) and register to receive Opportunity Downtown E-Updates.

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