



LOWER MANHATTAN
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"MWBE's make
move for
downtown work"

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MWBE's make move for downtown work

By DANIELLE WOLFFE

Advocates have launched a powerful campaign to help incorporate minority and women-owned enterprises [MWBE's] into Lower Manhattan's burgeoning construction projects while responding to the pressing need for talented labor as union halls empty out.

The campaign is the result of a collaboration between Crescent Consulting, DGS Consulting, LLC, and Carol Garvin Associates, who recently won a contract from Opportunity Downtown -- a program ad-

ministered by the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center to ensure women and minorities are included in the 59 projects centered in a one-mile cross area being rebuilt downtown.

"Because of all the construction going on, there is the fear that we will have to take people outside of Manhattan and of course we want to give New Yorkers the opportunity to work first. These kinds of programs will help to make

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sure that we do that," said Vincenza A. Restiano, director of Opportunity Downtown.

"What is unique for us is that there are so many projects going on, we are tied into the redevelopment of this



CAROL GARVIN

area as a mission almost, and this is certainly a good place for us to base this program."

One of the means the group hopes to employ to level the playing field is the creation of a newsletter that will serve, among other functions, to incorporate minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBE's) into the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan by keeping them "in the loop" about projects going out to bid.

"Most of the time when small businesses find out about the opportunity, it is too late. Often, decisions about who is going to be contracted for a project are made early on, sometimes on an architectural level after the plans have been drafted, it's a done deal and we are not sitting at the table when that happens," said Carol Garvin, principal of Carol Garvin Associates.

"The newsletter will give them the opportunity to look ahead and see what work is coming down the pipeline, so they can be in the loop like everybody else," Garvin said.

The group also hopes to encourage more women and minorities to join the unions. Though historically women and minorities were forbidden entrance into the labor unions -- a problem compounded for many years by nepotism -- they are now doing phenomenally well in unions such as carpentry, masonry and laborers, Garvin said. Yet there are some unions, such as electrical and plumbing, where representation is not as strong as it could be, she said.