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Greater LA Vendor Fair Draws 1,400 Business People



PHOTO BY DAVE SOTERO

Vendor Fair Celebrates Diversity of Agencies' Contractors

- MTA sponsors huge booth to showcase services.

BY DAVE SOTERO

(April 14, 2004) The 11th Annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair held Tuesday at the LA Convention Center drew 1,400 attendees interested in learning how to tap into billions of dollars of local contract opportunities in Los Angeles County.

CEO Roger Snoble, addressing a packed luncheon crowd, said, "By your attendance, today, you are proof that LA is home to one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse business communities in the country."

Snoble said MTA has dedicated itself to open competition and equitable treatment of all potential business contractors.

The agency's Diversity and Economic Opportunity department, for example, has conducted monthly orientation and certification workshops, hosted design and construction industry roundtables and participated in the Transportation Business Advisory Council (TBAC), which advises the agency on ways to increase small business participation in its procurement and contracting programs.

\$600 million in contracts

Last year, MTA awarded approximately 14,000 purchase orders and contracts worth in excess of \$600 million.

This year, in spite of a harsh budget environment in California, the

agency will offer millions of dollars in new contract opportunities for such high-priority transportation projects as the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the San Fernando Valley Metro Orange Line.

During the Vendor Fair, MTA hosted a huge booth that included tables and staff from Community Relations, Procurement, Commute Services, Diversity and Economic Opportunity, TBAC, Facilities, Prequalification, and Ethics.

The Community Relations Department made the "Metro Experience" mobile safety theater available to exhibit attendees.

The department also sponsored the production of a special six-minute video program spotlighting minority-owned businesses working with Metro.

Grew their businesses

While waiting to board the safety theater, attendees could see and hear culturally diverse owners from Metro Video Systems, Microlink Enterprise and Barrio Planners tell how they successfully contracted with MTA and grew their businesses.

The day-long business outreach exposition, sponsored jointly by MTA, Metropolitan Water District, L.A. Unified School District, City and County of Los Angeles, gave small business owners the opportunity to meet directly with contract administrators, buyers, managers and other procurement officers from these host agencies.

The fair also provided excellent networking opportunities for potential prime- and sub-contractors to meet. More than 200 exhibitors offered a variety of products and services.