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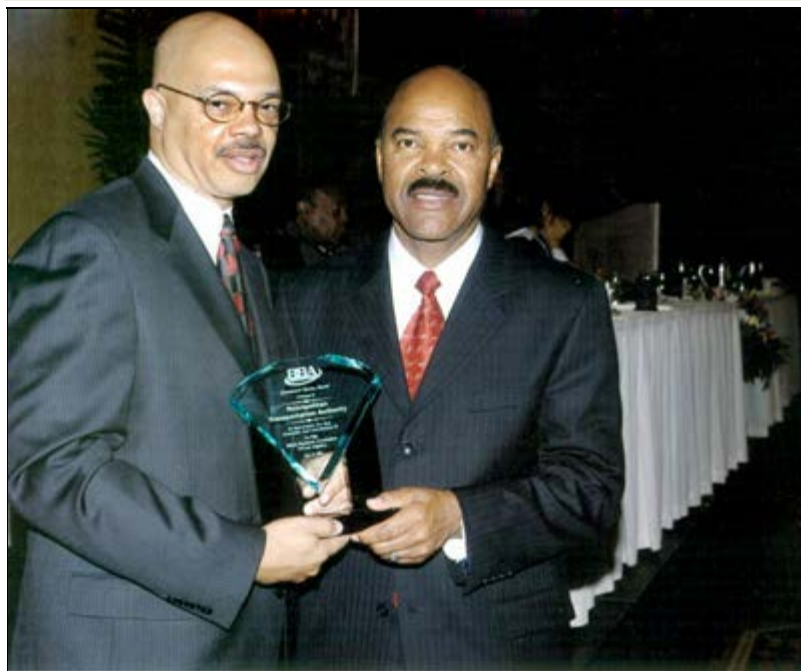
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Gerald Francis, General Manager of Rail Operations, receives Black Business Association's top honor from BBA President Ted Davis.



## Black Business Association names Metro "Government Agency of the Year"

- It's a 'five-peat' for Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department that strives for maximum small business participation in agency contracts.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

For the fifth time since 1992, Metro has received the 'Government Agency of the Year' award from the Black Business Association.

Metro is a top achiever in the 30-year history of the association, noted Earl "Skip" Cooper, BBA's Executive Director/Founder. "We have given the award to the agency's predecessors (RTD and LACTC) on a number of occasions, and this award marks the fifth time since 1992 that the agency's achievements merits this distinguished honor."

The BBA award honors government agencies that have been responsive in promoting economic development in the African-American community. In the last reporting period, which tallied an impressive \$75 million in contracts awarded to Disadvantaged and Minority-owned businesses, nearly \$10.9 million were awarded to African-American owned enterprises.

At the presentation on May 12, Gerald Francis, General Manager of Rail Operations, told an appreciative audience that Metro is honored to receive the BBA's "Government Agency of the Year" Award. "The

Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department is committed to ensure that all business opportunities have been reviewed and evaluated for maximum small business participation."

"Two units in the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department that are maximizing small business participation are the Contract Compliance Unit managed by Tashai Smith and the Certification Unit managed by Joe Hernandez," said Linda Wright, Deputy Executive Officer for Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department.

The Contract Compliance Unit pursues maximum certified business participation and monitor contracts to protect the level playing field for the small business community, said Smith. "We evaluate all opportunities for scopes of work that can contract out to smaller firms, particularly those that are certified by one of Metro's Small Business Certification Programs. We recently implemented the shared responsibility program where select business units take a more active role to achieve opportunity goals."

"We are continuously looking at methods to better assist and serve the small business community," said Hernandez. "Certification is a tool that eligible small firms utilize to access Metro procurement opportunities. Certification provides small businesses benefits not offered to other business interests such as: access to key procurement information, certification directories, an advantage to join consultant/contractor teams pursuing federal-funded projects and special outreach events designed solely for certified firms."

"Metro will continue its work at removing barriers that limit or prevent small businesses from achieving their potential," noted Wright.

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