



Speakers at PWC's "Meet the Architects & Engineers" upbeat

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"Budgets and work are incredibly tight ... but, there is a great need and what has been allocated for projects must be spent and must be built," said Alvin Dunaisky, AIA, AICP, assistant director for major hospitals projects with SUNY Downstate Medical Center, one of the speakers at the annual "Meet the Architects & Engineers" event presented by Professional Women in Construction (PWC) at Club 101 in NYC. His words summed up the evening's upbeat yet realistic tone.

Dunaisky discussed SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn's only academic medical center and one of the nation's leading urban medical centers. He said that the current capital program is in excess of \$600M for design and construction of new and renovated academic and healthcare facilities, and SUNY's overall capital program is in excess of \$7.5 billion.

He encouraged W/MBEs to bid as the center is employing a "new, aggressive, formal outreach program" and that "all firms are required to demonstrate good faith efforts to include meaningful participation by MWBE firms" with goals that have leaped to 20%.

Daniel O'Sullivan, P.E., vice president, Lizardos Engineering, said that although many private and public industries "are simply not spending money right now," there is an exception "in sustainability and energy efficiency," especially in the "healthcare/pharmaceutical industries, laboratories, and universities."

Making capital investments in energy efficiency will, noted O'Sullivan, "not only...help our client's bottom line, but...help preserve our vital natural resources for our children and our children's children."

Husam Ahmad, P.E., president and COO of HAKS, said that "all success begins with quality from which follows growth and profit." He noted that HAKS' growth remains healthy despite the economy. Ahmad stressed the importance of partnering with clients and other construction managers; pursuing design/build opportunities; and developing public/private partnerships. The firm currently has one such alliance in India, others are being sought in the Middle East and Africa.

Speaking also of industry trends, Michele Boddewyn, AIA, LEED AP, president, Alan Gaynor + Company, PC, said that design firms need to meet clients' evolving needs by creating flexible floor plans that anticipate future changes, and designing collaborative spaces that decrease private offices and increase open plan work areas and large, multi-purpose spaces. She noted that to maximize value employing "One Grand Gesture" - a bold use of color, texture, lighting or furnishings - can create a distinctive character without great expense. Finally, she said that LEED is "here to stay and will only continue to gain in importance."

Wally Caban, P.E., assistant chief engineer construction, Port Authority of NY & NJ, said that the Authority's budget of \$3.2 billion, a zero growth budget for the past two years, is strained as it needs to cover not only all much-needed work on projects at such sites as LaGuardia; the Holland Tunnel;

The Bayonne, Goethals and GW Bridge; but the WTC reconstruction as well.

He said that PANYNJ relies on the expertise of the architectural and engineering firms since "Only by working together and combining our talents and resources can we can achieve our goals. We rely on you and we need your help."

Nancy Czesak, RA, first vice president, Tishman Construction Corporation, concluded the evening by saying that "Tishman Construction continues to build projects that define the New York skyline just as we have done for the past 100+ years."

Current Tishman projects include Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy; Jacob K. Javits Convention Center renovation and expansion; One World Trade Center; WTC Towers 3 & 4; and the WTC Transportation Hub. Czesak invited attendees to bid and visit the supplier diversity website.

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