



PWC's "Meet the Architects & Engineers" draws heads of leading firms to industry event

September 21, 2007 - Spotlights

Leading representatives from several of New York City's major design and engineering firms plus chiefs of small to mid-sized businesses filled Club 101 on Tuesday, August 21, at Professional Women in Construction's (PWC) "Meet the Architects & Engineers, a networking and table-top exhibit event. Said PWC president Lenore Janis, "Exhibitors and guests from a wide spectrum of the construction industry flock to this event. It's a rare opportunity for them to meet and greet the top A&E people who set the standards and write the specs."

As one exhibitor, Peter Ward, business collaboration manager with InterDyn AKA, a global firm, explained, "We're here to meet the decision makers."

The guests of honor shared their views on industry trends now and in the future. The consensus: New York's design and construction industry is stronger than ever, and the region is going green.

David Cook, senior designer, LEED AP, HOK, noted that there is "a tremendous amount of work" in New York City. He then spoke of BIM, Building Information Modeling, that "will dramatically change how we design, deliver and build projects" and sustainability. Since the greening process will require innovative thinking to implement, planning is needed. "There are huge opportunities in sustainable urban planning and design in response to worldwide urbanization," said Cook.

Cheryl McKissack, civil engineer and president of The McKissack Group, represents the fifth generation of the oldest African American design & construction company in the nation. Saying that "the over 100 year old platform on which we have built our business is solid," she noted that the prognosis for construction is "one of abundance not only in the U.S., but internationally as well." McKissack stressed that "there are endless opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses, yet those that will succeed must be qualified and well-prepared."

Professor Ysrael Seinuk, P.E., chief executive officer of Ysrael A. Seinuk, PC, said that the metropolitan region needs to be aware of what is happening in the rest of the world and to "mold itself" accordingly.

"New York needs to look around and allow the engineers to use the technologies available today to help create more affordable housing. Some technologies used outside of New York City could - and should be applied here," said Seinuk.

Denise Berger, AIA, deputy director operations Engineering Department for the Port Authority of N.Y. & N.J., said, "Our agency is moving forward with a comprehensive capital plan that will maintain our existing facilities and provide for long-term infrastructure investments in the region. Some of the projects include rebuilding the WTC site, expanding our airports and our intermodal rail networks." She noted that the department will spend approximately \$80 million on consultants' services this year and has signed over 40 contracts with small, minority and women-owned businesses worth approximately \$30 million.

David Gockel, P.E., P.P., president, Langan Engineering & Environmental Services, spoke of the emphasis on sustainability that will soon require all project managers to be LEED certified. He said that new and existing environmental regulations will create work for the people attending the PWC event. Gockel noted the New York City renaissance that has been instrumental in Langan's dramatic growth as the firm doubled in size from \$50 million in revenues in 2003 to \$100 million in 2006.

Kenneth Lunstead, AIA, principal with Gensler New York, said, "This is a great time to be in the design and construction business in New York. Since interiors work may have peaked, we may start to see work on the city's infrastructure."

Lunstead spoke too of the need for an improved, more flexible office environment with ample light and thoughtfully placed workstations. "Since people spend only part of their time at their desks, we will be seeing different spaces and the elimination of the cube."

Exhibitors praised the event.

Edward Rothe, FAIA, principal, Fletcher Thompson Architecture Engineering, LLC, said, "To gain name recognition in this industry, it's helpful to be part of the PWC group, which has a wider representation of different facets of the industry than other organizations."

Or as Mary Hosley, CSI, CCPR, architectural manager of PPG Ideascapes, succinctly puts it, "The people PWC attracts to this event are the people we want to meet."

Event sponsors were: Weidlinger Associates, AEC Repro, BW Reprographics, InterDyn AKA, Langan, Milrose Consultants, MSD Visual, and Gig-Werks.

PWC will present THE BIG SHOW, a Trade Show & Recruitment Fair on October 17 at The Digital Sandbox, on Broad St., NYC. September activities include a Golf Outing and Developers Forum. Call 212.486.7745 or visit www.pwcusa.org for information or to register as a guest, exhibitor or sponsor.

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