



## **PWC Transportation Forum: Regional Update held on July 29**

August 11, 2014 - Design / Build

"We succeed or fail together. We need to focus our planning on projects that benefit all of us while generating operational efficiencies," said Veronique (Ronnie) Hakim, executive director of NJ Transit, in a clarion call for inter-agency collaboration echoed by the top transportation leaders at Professional Women In Construction's (PWC) annual Transportation Forum: Regional Update held the morning of July 29. The event, the latest in PWC's ongoing series of forums covering trending topics in regional transportation, drew a sellout crowd to The Yale Club.

Aviation expert William Fife, P.E., principal, The Fife Group and senior advisor, Weidlinger Associates, formerly with AECOM and the PANYNJ, the event's organizer and moderator for the past 20 years, told all that the major players in the region had assembled to "provide a snapshot" about jobs coming up and to offer further opportunities for W/M/S/DBEs - "I believe in these goals as do the people I invited here," he said.

Michael Horodniceanu, president, MTA Capital Construction, said, "A diverse workforce ...is a priority."

He noted that last year the MTA exceeded its state-funded 20% M/WBE goals with a 26% participation rate and has federally funded goals of 17%.

He outlined work on Sandy repair projects including the South Ferry Station Complex; the Cranberry Tube; and the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel and preventative measures for future storms.

Hakim said that NJ Transit's recently approved \$1.2 billion capital program requires a steady stream of federal and state funding to continue commitments to such programs as "state of good repair" and investment in the Northeast Corridor.

"We're looking at technology to improve customer service. Everything is about moving the customer through this region," said Hakim. She also advised all to become certified as a DBE and to take advantage of training and networking.

Stephanie Dawson, acting chief operating officer, PANYNJ, spoke of the authority's commitment and achievement in delivering maximum transportation and related services, including moving goods from our piers, and people and goods through our local bridges and tunnels and around the globe.

The PANYNJ 2014 budget sets a foundation for growth and the 10 year, \$27.6 billion capital program ensures a safe, secure and state of the art infrastructure.

Dawson outlined plans for such key projects as the Bayonne Bridge elevation; Goethals Bridge replacement; LaGuardia Airport Central Terminal and Newark Airport Terminal A redevelopment; and WTC construction and reinforced the need for small, minority and women owned businesses to assist in that delivery, as well as that of the large number of State of Good Repair projects.

Joan McDonald, commissioner, NYSDOT, noted that the present and future were looking "much brighter" than they did when she spoke at a PWC forum two years ago.

"We remain mindful of one of our chief priorities: equal access to opportunities for MWBEs and DBEs," she said, , "NYSDOT is proud that our MWBE attainment for the 2013-2014 fiscal year was 30.6%, well exceeding the goal of 20% and that \$209M in total expenditures went to MWBEs. " She listed several NYSDOT mega-projects in Region 11 comprising the five boroughs including the recently completed federally funded rehab of the Alexander Hamilton Bridge and the Kosciuszko Bridge replacement project. The focus is on investment and preservation, she said, "We need all of you to be our partners."

Polly Trottenberg, commissioner, NYC DOT, spoke of the agency's \$6.3 billion 5-year capital program and its focus on safer streets through the Mayor's Vision Zero program.

She stressed the NYC DOT's interest in continuing a "closer partnership with sister agencies," noting that a highly "integrated system" is essential for better regional mobility.

Trottenberg also expressed the agency's continued commitment to "creating opportunities for MWDWBEs."

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Shown (from left, front) are: Bill Fife, Weidlinger Associates and The Fife Group; 2nd row: Polly Trottenberg, NYC DOT; Ronnie Hakim, NJ Transit; back: Stephanie Dawson, PANYNJ; Joan McDonald, NYS DOT; Michael Horodniceanu, MTA Capital Construction; Lenore Janis, PWC. Photo by Pearl Perkins.

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