



## **Professional Women in Construction draws industry crowd to meet the construction titans**

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"These are the movers, shakers and decision makers in our industry, a group determined to expand and rebuild our region - and beyond" said Professional Women in Construction (PWC) president Lenore Janis on February 26 as she introduced the honored guests at PWC's "Meet the Construction Chiefs," a business interchange featuring table-top exhibits. The evening event drew a diverse crowd of C/A/E executives and professionals as well as representatives of allied industries to Club 101 in NYC.

Honored guest Michael Gallin is a partner in John Gallin & Son, Inc., a 122 year old, family-owned GC firm that, said Gallin, is now five generations strong.

Gallin noted that while "current indicators show we're still in a growth period, with numerous projects booked through government and developers for the next few years" the industry needs to heed underlying signs in the economy which may hinder future construction.

The firm is currently working on Mercy Corps, 4,000 s/f at Battery Park Place through the Action Center to End World Hunger. He hopes to involve WBE/MBEs in the "museum-type quality project, one of the first interior fit-outs to be Platinum LEED certified."

As the president of BNF Contractors, Inc., a woman-owned business enterprise (WBE), Barbara Giordano said that sustaining a WBE can be challenging. "Women need to knock harder on doors to gain entrance. But you can definitely pave your own path in this industry."

Pointing to stats showing a marked increase in woman-owned firms in New York State from 1997 to 2006, Giordano concluded that "we can all...acknowledge that WBEs have proven their relevance in today's marketplace and will continue to play a strong role well into the future."

Walter McKelvey, senior vice president/regional manager with Gilbane Building Company, a firm founded in 1873 which remains, he said, "one of the largest family-owned construction companies in the U.S.," noted the firm's commitment to diversity.

Gilbane is seeking firms wishing to partner, and has created an online bidding process. Noting the firm's focus on healthcare, higher education and K-12, three "very lively" markets, McKelvey said that Gilbane does a large amount of public sector work and expressed hopes that the government will continue to "allow the expansion necessary" in these areas.

Charles Murphy, senior vice president and general manager with Turner Construction Company, which is, through its subsidiaries, the leading general builder in the U.S., spoke also of a commitment to diversity saying that "over 27% of our employees are women and over 44% are women or minorities." He said that seeking diversity is, simply, "the right thing to do."

Speaking of industry trends, Murphy said that green building and LEED accreditation and BIM modeling are on the rise, and that New York City will strengthen its work in both areas.

Frank Pampalone, director of design, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., told the audience that the retail giant

reported over \$100 billion in sales for its fourth quarter, a record return for any retailer. Though the recent decision to reduce its rate of growth will improve its ROI, Wal-Mart still plans to open 140 new supercenters in 2008, with 11 currently under construction in the tri-state area, 60 in the planning stages, and remodels also scheduled.

Wal-Mart's current growth is also concentrating on the international market which is, noted Pampalone, "now a \$90 billion a year business." He noted too that the firm is looking for some new contractors, civil engineers and architects for up to 600 existing store remodel improvement initiatives.

Steven Plate, director WTC Construction Department with The Port Authority of NY & NJ, said that over \$15 billion will be invested over five years at the WTC site including five office towers, totaling approximately 10 million s/f. The Freedom Tower, one of the world's tallest buildings, will, said Plate, create "a legacy that is a tribute to the human spirit."

Plate said too that the work will be "cutting edge at every turn" and that the Authority is committed to contracting with WBEs and MBEs with close to \$130 million already awarded at the WTC site.

He said that the work is for more than buildings: "250,000 people will come each day and they will remember those we lost."

The event drew praise from many including first-time exhibitor Dave Genson, director of sales for Onyx Power, who said, "The list of speakers and exhibitors here make it clear that PWC is a major player in the NYC market."

Photographs by Howard Wechsler.

Shown (from left) are: Alicia Shawlinski, recruiting associate; Susan Glassey, vice president talent/employee relations; Jim Durkin, senior vice president; and Hector Rodriguez, administrative assistant.