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PWC hosts networking and table-top exhibit event - "Meet the Construction Chiefs"

March 20, 2009 - Spotlights

"The public agencies represented here tonight have billions and millions to spend on construction and design," said Professional Women in Construction (PWC) NY-National president Lenore Janis, introducing the roster of guest speakers at February's sold-out grand networking and table-top exhibit event, "Meet the Construction Chiefs," held at Club 101 in NYC.

Noting that PWC is headlining the area that promises the greatest opportunities in the current economic climate, Janis addressed the packed crowd saying, "Your presence here tonight tells us that PWC has struck the right chord by bringing leaders from the public sector to update you on where the funding lies and what projects are up for bid."

Michael Horodniceanu, president of MTA Capital Construction, noted that through 2008, just over \$6 billion of MTA Capital Construction's program had been committed with an additional \$8 billion to follow over the next few years.

"Every \$1 billion of capital spending generates an estimated 8,500 total jobs, \$440 million in total wages and \$1.5 billion in total sales or economic activity in New York and the New York region," he said.

He added that the "construction business is looking up," and that the MTA's new chief diversity officer, Michael Garner (formerly with the NYC SCA) is a seasoned veteran committed to increasing opportunities for D/M/WBEs.

Steven Lawitts, acting commissioner with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, is overseeing an \$18 billion, 10-year capital program funded by revenues from water customers through the sale of bonds. The focus is on infrastructure initiatives including Water Tunnel #3, a monumental project running under the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn; a filtration plant for the Croton system under Van Cortlandt Park; and an ultraviolet disinfection plant in Westchester that will serve the Delaware and Catskill systems. In addition, billions of dollars invested longterm in upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities hope to open 90% of the City's waterways for recreational use.

Rosina Abramson, vice president planning/government affairs with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. (NYS), applauded the evening's focus saying, "We need to keep life going in the city, the state, and the nation." While economic swings are cyclical, she advised all to keep "something in the pipeline," and have plans set and "ready to go."

She spoke of Roosevelt Island's current rebuilding of the 32-year-old aerial tramway, a \$25 million project; AVAC (automated vacuum), Roosevelt Island's green underground waste disposal system; and of South Point Park, a ten-acre park that will break ground this spring or summer.

George Toma, vice president construction management with the NYC School Construction Authority, spoke of a \$13 billion, five year program, saying that 2009 is budgeted for \$3 billion with

\$1.5 billion to spend by the end of June. Noting that the average age of the City's schools is 60 with many in need of renovations, he urged all to bid as the NYC SCA "is second to none in its commitment to W/MBEs."

Jim Starace, deputy director construction/engineer-construction manager with the Port Authority of NY & NJ, spoke of 19 renovations planned under the \$6.7 billion budget with \$3.3 billion pledged for capital projects including a new Goethals Bridge; PATH improvements; participation in the ARC, Access to the Region's Core-New Jersey Transit rail tunnel; the WTC rebuilding and improvements at all Port Authority airports.

The event's exhibitors were enthusiastic in their praise. Mike Drerup, P.E., managing engineer, called it "a 'who's who' of the construction industry in New York," and added that "it's important to promote the role of women and it's necessary for the professional community to remain even more close knit as times get tougher."

Bill Brody, vice president, IBEX Construction LLC, said, "This event demonstrates clearly just how valuable PWC is to the NYC real estate and construction industry. PWC draws a great crowd of professionals!"

PWC will present its annual Transportation Forum on Thursday, April 23. Visit twww.pwcusa.org for information or reservations. NY Plumbing & Heating; Everready Blueprint; The Blue Book of Construction; NYCSCA. Shown (from left back row) are: Ibex Construction; A. Esteban Co.; and The LiRo Group.

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