



Speakers at PWC National Transportation Forum outline plans to rebuild region's ailing infrastructure

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The federal \$787 billion stimulus package and other funding buoyed the hopes of the quartet of transportation leaders from area agencies who spoke at the annual Transportation Forum hosted by Professional Women in Construction (PWC) National in April. All agreed that the nation and the region are moving in a positive direction to rebuild a system in dire need of repair.

"The condition of our infrastructure is jeopardizing our nation's efforts to support the economy," said William Fife, P.E., principal, The Fife Group, reprising his role as moderator at the forum, as he introduced the speakers.

Susan Bass Levin, deputy director of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and a two-time PWC honoree, said the the nation and the region will "rebuild, recover and re-emerge stronger than before." The Port Authority will continue work on the ARC (Access to the Region's Core) tunnel, a trans-Hudson rail line linking Manhattan to New Jersey, on PATH travel, and on rebuilding the WTC site. It will improve the seaport, air travel and the express rail freight system.

Richard Raczynski, chief engineer for the N.J. Turnpike Authority, outlined his agency's 10 year, \$7 billion capital plan - funded by bonds, not the federal plan - which includes upgrades for roadways, bridges, and facilities for the turnpike and the Garden State Parkway

Philip Eng, regional director NYS Department of Transportation, in charge of capital construction for all of New York City's boroughs, spoke of Obama's call for 'shovel-ready' projects and noted that \$48 billion of the federal stimulus funds will go to transportation with \$1.1 billion for NYS highway projects.

Ernest Williams, director of special projects and compliance with N.J. Transit's Office of Business Diversity, said that obtaining the appropriate certification as a minority, woman, disadvantaged, or small business is the "entry pass into construction." With numerous major projects being launched in this region the "opportunities are tremendous and we need to be prepared to take advantage of them."

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