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DATE: February 1, 2017

High-Speed Rail Authority Receives State Diversity Award for Small Business Outreach

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) has been honored for its outreach to California-certified small, minority, women and disabled veteran-owned businesses. The California Department of General Services awarded the Authority with the Richard G. Polanco Diversity Outreach Award at its annual State Agency Recognition Awards ceremony designed to honor State departments for their excellence in business contracting.

The award, presented last week by its namesake, the Honorable Richard G. Polanco, former California State Senate Majority Leader and former member of the California State Assembly, is meant to recognize a state department that demonstrates excellence in increasing participation of minority, women and LGBTQ-owned businesses in California state contracting.

In state fiscal year 2015-16, the Authority engaged in over 100 outreach events including pre-bids, conferences, workshops, and trainings designed to connect small and disabled veteran-owned businesses to the high-speed rail program. To ensure that the Authority is reaching diverse businesses many of these events were done in partnership with ethnic chambers of commerce, minority, women, and veteran professional groups and associations. As of September 2016 there are 327 certified Small Businesses working on the high-speed rail program including 103 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and 38 Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises.

“We’re extremely honored and excited to be recognized for our efforts to engage California’s diverse small business community,” said Small Business Advocate Alice Rodriguez. “The Authority is committed to ensuring that certified small, minority, women, LGBTQ and disabled veteran-owned businesses play a major role in building the nation’s first high-speed rail system.”

At the annual awards ceremony held at the Citrus Heights Community Center on Wednesday, January 25, 2017, the Authority received two other awards for meeting the State’s small business contracting goals and for increasing disabled veteran business participation by 7 percent over fiscal year 2014 – 2015.

In an effort to advance outreach and small business participation, the Authority recently launched ConnectHSR, a free online vendor registry that will provide businesses, large and small, with a quick and easy way to get connected to high-speed rail businesses opportunities. Learn more and get registered at www.ConnectHSR.com

Achieving goals for small business participation in state and federally funded contracts continues to be a major goal for the high-speed rail program. This is the result of an aggressive Small Business Program designed to help certified Small Businesses, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises get involved in the high-speed rail program. It was approved by the Board of Directors in 2012 and has a 30% goal for Small Business participation including Micro-Businesses and Women-Owned Businesses. The 30% goal includes goals of 10 percent for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and 3 percent for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises.

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