

Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • Volume 11: Issue 02

SPRING 2023



Small Business Program

The Authority is committed to small businesses playing a major role in building the statewide high-speed rail system. The Small Business Program has an aggressive 30 percent goal for small business participation including Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) and Micro-Business (MB).

**SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER
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To access and download more information pertaining to the small business program, visit the Small Business Resources webpage at <https://hsr.ca.gov/small-business/>

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To view past newsletters visit:

<https://hsr.ca.gov/business-opportunities/small-business-program/small-business-newsletter/>

www.hsr.ca.gov

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SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

as of February 2023



How to Do Business with the State of California

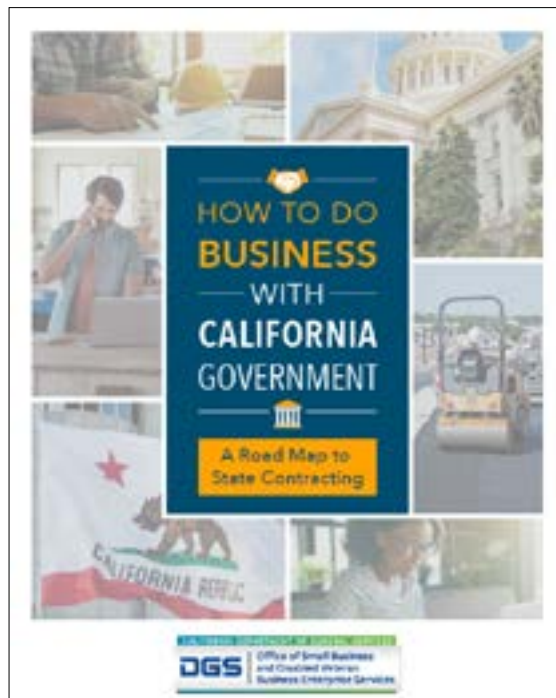
Visit these resources for education, training, and support in growing a thriving business, doing business with the state of California, and connecting with High-Speed Rail Authority.



ConnectHSR
High-Speed Rail Vendor Registry

Connect with High-Speed Rail

Register your business at www.ConnectHSR.com



HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

A Road Map to State Contracting

DGS Office of Small Business and Contract Design Business Enterprise Services



AMERICA'S SBDC CALIFORNIA

There are 56 Small Business Development Centers in California, working to help small businesses

www.californiasbdc.org



We help entrepreneurs start, grow or successfully exit businesses through mentoring and education.

www.score.org

SCORE

FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS



APEX ACCELERATORS

www.apexaccelerators.us/#/

APEX Accelerators provide education and training to ensure that all businesses become capable of participating in federal, state, and local government contracts.

Mistler's Musings

Happy Spring to all our partners in the California small business community! The weather is finally getting warmer across the state, and we are continuing with our efforts to ramp up the Authority's small business program and connect our small businesses with our procurements.

I want to start off this latest column by saying thanks to those small businesses that provided letters of support for two applications we submitted in late April totaling more than \$3 billion in federal grant funding. Our applications for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program include funding for:

- Purchasing six fully electric train sets capable of speeds more than 200 mph.
- Constructing a second track on the 119-mile high-speed rail from Madera to Poplar Avenue.
- Constructing the Fresno Station.
- Completing final design on the Merced and Bakersfield extensions and commencing right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation.
- Advancing the next phase of design into the Bay Area (Merced to San Jose) and into Southern California (Bakersfield to Palmdale).

We ultimately received dozens of support letters from numerous small businesses, elected officials from cities and counties around the state, members of the legislature, 36 members of California's congressional delegation, a former US secretary of transportation, Governor Brown and Governor Newsom. This is one of several grants we have submitted to advance the high-speed rail program, and factsheets about these grants are available on our [factsheet page](#).



As far as our small business program efforts, we've recently done a little spring cleaning to the small business pages on the Authority's website and have added some new information in the last few weeks. One of the new pages: [Get on Board](#) – is set up to be a quick guide for businesses to learn how they can get certified as a small business, contract opportunities, links to our ConnectHSR Vendor Registry and other links designed to provide resources to current and future certified small businesses.

Also new this spring is our [Business Advisory Council \(BAC\) biography page](#). This page was designed to provide a quick overview of our valued Small Business Advisory Council members and the organizations they represent on the board. Check it out when you get a chance! You can also view more about the mission of the BAC, the 2023 schedule and meeting materials and resources on our BAC page. We've also added a new standing resources page to this newsletter going forward. Check out page 3 to see more.





This quarter's issue, we provided links to ConnectHSR, resources from the Department of General Services, APEX Accelerator, America's Small Business Development Centers and SCORE. We hope you find these resources valuable and please let us know if you have any suggestions for future issues.

We recently brought on board Asha Grayson, our new Small Business Technical Associate, to our Small Business Program team. In her previous work prior to joining our program, she worked with small businesses, nonprofits and community stakeholders to provide wraparound services to justice-involved youth, and to support the needs of an alternative restorative court system in Chicago, called the Restorative Justice Community Court. She has joined our program with a passion to help ensure that small businesses, minority-owned businesses and veteran-owned businesses are able to access opportunities with the Authority. Her goal is to create more opportunities for Black and brown communities to experience greater economic and social success in America. Asha earned a Bachelor of Arts from UC Berkeley, where she majored in Social Welfare and African-American studies. She went on to Northwestern



Asha Grayson, Small Business Technical Associate

Pritzker School of Law, where she earned her Juris Doctor. We couldn't be more excited to have her on board, and please say hi to her when you get a chance.

May is Small Business Month, and I can't think of a better time to look back on some of our major accomplishments in 2022 as a program. We published the 2022 Outreach & Equity Plan, which helps guide the work our program is working to accomplish. We hosted four BAC meetings and held 26 workshops, including meet the prime events. We participated in several pre-bid and small business workshops supporting Authority contracts, partnered with organizations, including the Small Business

Administration (SBA), Apex Accelerator and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and hosted a successful Public Works Contracting series with APEX Accelerator, formerly Procurement and Technical Assistance Center (PTAC).

My team has also been actively engaging with small businesses and members of the public. We engaged with over 1,400 active vendor registry accounts in our ConnectHSR database, which is one of the best ways our small business teams can learn about and share business and educational opportunities. We published four issues of the award-winning Small Business Newsletter, and we have fielded over 230 emails and phone calls.

Under our compliance side of the shop, we brought on 97 new small businesses. Overall, we have added businesses at a steady pace, and excitingly, we saw an increase in utilizations of our small businesses and Disabled Business Enterprises. We also streamlined our Contract and Expenditures report (C&E), and our small business utilization analysis, which has resulted in saving over 20 hours of work per month and a succinct, simple to digest report. We also worked hand-in-hand with our procurements and contracts office to onboard seven new prime contractors, who are working on future construction in the Central Valley, our station planning efforts and the Authority's new Program Delivery Services partner.

As I close out this column, I just wanted to say thank you all for the work you all do in supporting the high-speed rail program and we look forward to working with all of you to be part of this transformative program.



Small Business Events



Authority Board of Directors Meeting

May 11, 2023

11 a.m.
Sacramento Location TBD

June 29, 2023

11 a.m.
Sacramento Location TBD

July 27, 2023

11 a.m.
Sacramento Location TBD

Small Business Program Business Advisory Council Meeting

May 24, 2023

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Via Zoom

July 26, 2023

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Via Zoom

June 7, 2023

Caltrans Districts 7 and 8 Procurement Fair

9 a.m. – noon
Fontana Location TBD



June 27, 2023

Positioning Your Company for Opportunity with California Capital APEX

10 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Via Zoom



July 12, 2023

Caltrans North Region Resource Roundtable Workshop

10 a.m. – noon
Via Zoom



Speedreads



FRENCH COMPANY TO BUILD EGYPT'S 330KM HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINE

French contractor NGE and its subsidiary TSO have signed a deal to build the new 330km high-speed rail line in Egypt, providing expertise, human and material resources to local companies Orascom and Arab Contractors. [The double-line track will connect the cities of Ain Al Sokhna and Borg El Arab, through the city of October 6.](#) NGE's planned line will become a part of the world's sixth-largest high-speed rail network, connecting about 90 percent of the Egyptian population to trains running at 230 km/hr. (Photo Courtesy of NGE Company)



THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE IS CELEBRATING THREE YEARS OF FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In an effort to reduce traffic congestion, Luxembourg became the first nation to offer free public transportation. [Luxembourg is now celebrating three years of its free transportation policy, contributing to a cleaner environment and a more practical way to move around the small nation of 640,000 people.](#) While this policy is funded by taxpayers, François Bausch, the Minister of Mobility and Public Works, says Luxembourg's progressive tax system places a low tax burden on those with lower incomes. (Photo Courtesy of Martyn Jandula/Shutterstock)



ITALY PLANS HIGH-SPEED TRAIN BETWEEN POMPEII AND ROME

In efforts to increase tourism to the country's historical sites, Italy plans to open a high-speed rail connection between Rome and Pompeii. [This €38 million project would create a transportation hub adjacent to the ancient city of Pompeii, which would double visitor numbers in the city from roughly 20,000 a day.](#) The station would open in 2024 and create an efficient form of travel, bypassing part of the coastal stretch from Rome to Pompeii. The hub will also connect visitors to the Villa Dei Misteri stop of the Circumvesuviana railway network, which runs trains to archaeological sites Ercolano, Oplontis and Stabiae. (Photo Courtesy of Getty Images)



EUROSTAR CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF TRAVEL BETWEEN LONDON AND AMSTERDAM

Eurostar, the UK's high-speed rail connecting to mainland Europe, has just celebrated five years of service between London and the Netherlands. [Since opening a line to the Netherlands, Eurostar has carried over 1.6 million passengers between the route, equivalent to over 10,000 plane loads.](#) The number of travelers connecting at Brussels for journeys between the Netherlands and the UK has increased by 106% since the line went into service. Gwendoline Cazenave, CEO of Eurostar Group, said they hope to see their high-speed rail lines carrying 30 million passengers a year by 2030, contributing to a greener way of travel. (Photo courtesy of Lex can Lieshout/EPA)



RECORD TRAFFIC ON SAUDI HIGH SPEED LINE DURING RAMADAN

During the month of Ramadan (March 23 to April 25, this year), the Haramain High Speed Rail line connecting Makkah and Madinah carried a record number of passengers. The line, operated on behalf of the Saudi government by Spanish national train operator RENFE, ran on a special Ramadan timetable aimed to meet the needs of both residents and the thousands of pilgrims, including night services after the iftar fast-breaking evening meal. On April 14th, the HSR broke its own record for highest number of passengers in a single day, with over 37,000 people riding on 115 trains. [Read more here \(free registration required to read\).](#) (Photo courtesy of Renfe)

Hayward Concrete Expert Goes Green for Rail Project



Ted Landavazo and his brother John

Ted Landavazo doesn't live close to Madera. But he owns a home there. The company he co-founded, Landavazo Bros., is based in Hayward, the heart of the East Bay. It's about 150 miles from his business' location to where the California High-Speed Rail Authority is busily prepping the Central Valley to lay tracks in the next few years.

If the traffic is good – chuckle at that sentiment, if you like – it takes his workers and equipment about three hours to get down to the project. That's a lot of time for his team to spend on the road, so Landavazo bought a house in Madera, giving his team a nice place to stay for the night when they're working on the project.

Landavazo and his workers pour concrete. The small, Latino-owned company handles a variety of work. For the Authority, Landavazo and his team pour walls, beams and anything else that might be needed. He's worked in the business since 1981, when he was 19 years old. Now with a son working for him and grandchildren in California, Landavazo says the rail project is about much more than connecting the state's spread-out communities.

"It means a lot. I think it's great," he said. "I have a son (Jonathan), he's 26 years old, working for me now. He's been with me about 5 years. ... We were sitting in a meeting a couple years ago on a hot summer day in downtown Fresno. There were a bunch of guys in the



Ted Landavazo holds granddaughter Quinn in his Hayward office.

“For me, when we do something like this, it’s for my grandkids. ... The state needs to go green, it’s very important for all of us.”

- Ted Landavazo, Co-Founder, Landavazo Brothers, Inc.

room and not much was going on. My son kicked me and said, ‘Why do we do this?’ It’s not for me, it’s not for your mom, but the state does need green stuff and this is obviously a green job.”

Landavazo would know. He has a front-row seat to a project that has transformed the way California builds infrastructure. For starters, regulations require Landavazo to use equipment that produces the least amount of greenhouse gasses possible. He replaced all his boom pumps – those extendable arms that reach long distances for big jobs – with the most efficient equipment available.

Even the cement itself is different. The Authority is using [25% fly ash](#) in its concrete mix, which requires less water and makes the concrete structures stronger and less permeable.

“For me, when we do something like this, it’s for my grandkids,” Landavazo said.

He thinks about his family a lot. Landavazo recently put solar panels on his roof and an electric vehicle charger in his garage because it’s good for the future. And he might retire, one day, and Jonathan will take over the company. The leadership of Landavazo Bros. might change. Thinking about the future will not.

“He’s following the project about as close as I am,” Ted Landavazo said. “I think he’s of the same mindset I am. The state needs to go green, it’s very important for all of us.”

Jim Patrick

Blackburn Consulting, Inc.



Soil vapor extraction (SVE) system manifold (left) and control panel (right)

It's no easy task to clean up the sins of the past. Certain properties may have remnants of its previous owners that may need to be remediated or removed before high-speed rail can set foot and begin construction.

Enter [Blackburn Consulting](#), a company with more than 20 years of experience and a mission to provide excellent and economical engineering solutions and fertile ground to help solve some of the most challenging of problems.

The company was formed in 1998 by Tom and Grace Blackburn, and now has offices in Auburn, West Sacramento and Fresno, California.

Blackburn Consulting began working with the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) focusing on right of way acquisitions and environmental site assessments between Merced and Kern counties.

Now, Blackburn has been primarily working in Construction Package (CP) 1 on detailed site assessments, defining what hazardous materials are on specific sites that may impact the project and determining what type of remediation is needed to clean it up.

"Usually, we're trying to define what and where the contaminants might be. This may include going through old records to figure out what may have been on such properties or doing soil and ground water testing for evidence of contaminants," said Laura Long, environmental project manager for Blackburn Consulting. "If there are, we have to define them and see if they are above any regulatory limits and get direction of the type of clean up. It can be very site specific."



SVE blower and carbon filter vessels.

From properties that handled dangerous chemicals, to locations where former gas stations were built, the biggest challenges require the most innovative of solutions.

In an interview with the experts at Blackburn, including Long and project manager Rob Sandquist, both provided an overview of an innovative solution they're bringing to CP 1 – a soil vapor extraction (SVE) system utilized to remove contaminants from soil, gas and groundwater.

Sandquist put it in simplest terms possible.

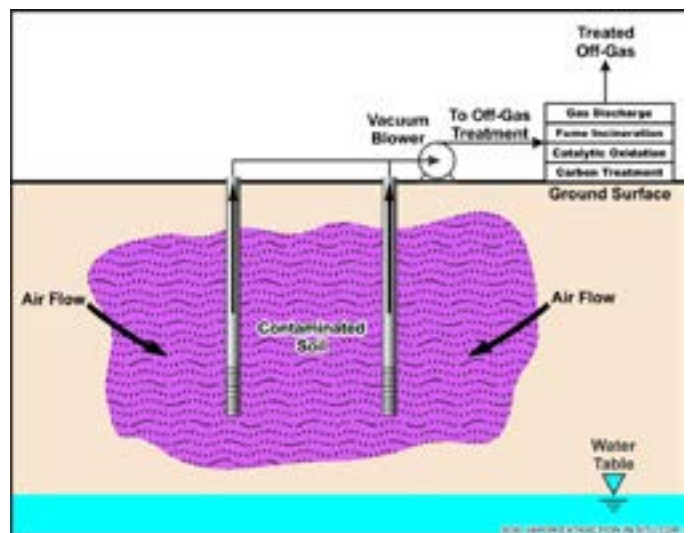
"It's basically a giant vacuum that sucks the gas out of the soil, and goes through carbon filtering to remove those contaminants," said Sandquist.

The system involves drilling extraction wells to a depth above the water table. A vacuum will pull air and vapors through the soil and up the well and through a network of pipes to a central treatment location. According to the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), SVE's are safe when properly designed and operated and the treatment involves no harmful chemicals. There are also no harmful emissions or pollutants released into the air, aligning with the Authority's mission to deliver the greenest infrastructure project in the nation.

"Certain properties are challenges, and these are the cards we've been dealt," added Sandquist when asked about the challenge of cleaning up some old sites to make way for high-speed rail. "We're proud to be doing our part, cleaning up the site and helping the high-speed rail be good neighbors to the surrounding community and businesses in the area."

Augie Blancas



An illustration of the soil vapor extraction system.



Small Business Making Seismic Waves in Engineering

Despite the commonly used acronym conveying a different meaning, the team at [IDC Consulting Engineers, Inc. \(IDC\)](#) places a significant amount of care and effort into projects that shape infrastructure throughout the state of California.

Based out of Southern California, IDC continues to lend its decades of engineering expertise to California's high-speed rail project, the Link US project at Union Station in Los Angeles, and other transportation-related projects.

In October 1995, IDC was launched under Dr. Xiaoyun Wu's leadership. In 2012, principal Wendy Li joined the firm. Prior to joining IDC, Li had extensive experience managing large corridor projects and administering transportation funding as a program manager for the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority.

With Li managing the contracts and focusing on the company's business development, and Wu focusing on delivering IDC's technical services, the partnership has built an efficient, results-oriented company to be proud of with a staff of just under 20 employees.

A renowned engineer in China, Wu honed her experience by contributing to the country's seismic design standards. However, Wu might argue that the late '80s were some of the most important influential years of her early career.

In 1988, the University of Southern California (USC) awarded Wu with a full Ph.D. scholarship to study earthquake engineering at the institution. A year later, and after the Loma Prieta earthquake, Caltrans initiated a statewide bridge seismic program which created a strong demand for bridge engineers with knowledge and background in earthquake engineering. Wu led the seismic assessment and retrofit for the Richmond-San Rafael Toll Bridge and the San Francisco Bay Bridge replacement projects.



IDC Consulting Engineering team: (top row, L-R) Wendy Li, Julia Fu, Leo Chen, Helen He; (middle row, L-R) Xiaoyun Wu, Ping Zhang, David Wang, Zack Fok; (bottom row, L-R) Edwin Viray, Chris Rivera, Louis Ni, Gary Wei

These complex engineering projects kindled her passion and purpose not only for engineering but for life, leading Wu to establish IDC consulting Engineers – and making the United States of America her home.

IDC began working on the California High-Speed Rail project through Construction Package 2-3 (CP 2-3), providing their resources and expertise to assist with independent checks for the 6500-foot-long Hanford Viaduct in the Central Valley. IDC took the challenge head-on and delivered on schedule – thus leading IDC to become the Independent Check Engineer for CP 2-3 moving forward.

Since then, IDC has completed structure independent checks for 11 Type 1 structures – In addition, IDC has completed over 2000 technical submittal reviews – which are meant to ensure that the result(s) conforms to the intended design.

IDC credits high-speed rail as an instrumental part of the company's growth, expanding to 15 full-time employees with 4 part-time employees. Wu states, "[We] prefer to focus on developing our staff's technical expertise, enabling us to work more efficiently instead of pushing for rapid growth."

Like many businesses, the pandemic years made that clear for most individuals and businesses, small or large. "The pandemic had a significant impact on our operations, forcing us [the owners] to use our savings to fund the company's payroll and ensure our valuable employees could remain on staff," Li shares. Despite all the adversity that presented itself through the pandemic, IDC kept moving forward.

Comprehensive delivery teams needed for a project of this scale provided IDC with new and incredibly valuable learning experiences, enabling staff to gain new technical skills and embrace new processes to deliver their work on the nation's first high-speed rail project. "These new learning experiences have helped us develop new skills that we can utilize on other projects, enabling us to provide even better solutions to our clients," Wu declares.

Wu has much to look back and reflect on – from her journey as a female engineer in China that provided significant contributions to China's seismic design standards, to working on transformative projects such as the iconic Glendale Hyperion Bridge in Los Angeles, Link US, Brightline West, and of course – the California High-Speed Rail system in the Central Valley. However, the future still has more to offer.

In the coming years, IDC hopes to continue working on the high-speed rail project and be amongst the first few lucky engineers to ride the nation's first high-speed rail system. "[Riding the train] would be a point of pride for us to know that we worked on this groundbreaking project," Li expressed.

IDC aspires to continue growing - slow and steady – and move beyond its Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise status to become a mid-sized engineering company. "We are committed to providing true engineering solutions to international communities and delivering high-quality work to all of our clients," Li asserts.

Anthony Stijepovic



IDC Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Small Business Partnership: NorCal Apex



The Norcal APEX team at the annual PTAC conference

Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAC), a free federal program helping small businesses get government contracts, has been rebranded as [APEX Accelerators](#). “The goal with rebranding was to elevate the program and to call attention to it at a national level,” says Taylor Bowes, director of Norcal APEX Accelerator.

This change was implemented last fall, with all 96 PTACs nationwide rebranding this year. “We are taking the renaming and re-branding slowly, so we don’t lose clients and partnerships,” Bowes says. “For the next six months our program will use both PTAC and APEX Accelerator names.”

What is behind the change? In 2022, the federal management of the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) transitioned from the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to its Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). This raised the program within DOD, tying it closer to policy and strategy decisions.

In addition, according to the DOD’s [2023 Small Business Strategy](#), small business participation in the U.S.’s Defense Industrial Base (DIB) declined 40% over the last decade. “The DOD identified the PTAC/ APEX program as ‘the front door’ to the government market for small businesses and a key strategy for increasing small businesses participation in the DIB,” Bowes says. “We feel charged by this transition and excited by the support the program is receiving at the federal level. Our mission is more important than ever.”



A recent NorCal APEX training event in San Francisco

Norcal APEX has big plans for this new phase including expanding their services, trainings, partnerships and federal connections. “We will make a more concerted effort to seek out small businesses offering innovative solutions to nationwide problems or who can contribute to the DIB. Our mission has grown to address a shrinking industrial base and help make the U.S. more competitive,” says Bowes.

They will also keep providing services they are known for: assisting with local state and federal registrations, market research, marketing strategy, capabilities statements, bid submittals, contract compliance, socio-economic certifications, and construction and public works contracting.

Who can benefit from an APEX Accelerator? “If you are brand new to government contracting or a seasoned pro with a specific challenge, we are here to serve you,” says Bowes. There are no commitments for clients, Norcal APEX only requires an intake survey. “We like to establish relationships with our clients. We are not a call center or help desk,” Bowes notes. Once the survey is in, a procurement specialist will reach out within three business days. “Our staff, on average, has over 30 years of experience in government procurement and are some of the most friendly, approachable people you will meet.”

“Government contracting can be hard! It can be overwhelming! It can be confusing!” Bowes says, “We are here to help guide you and are the only program that has 360-degree insight into the challenges small businesses, prime contractors *and* government agencies face. You will learn things you didn’t even know you didn’t know.”

For more about Norcal APEX’s services [click here](#).

Katta Hules



Celebrating Cultural Awareness and Earth Day

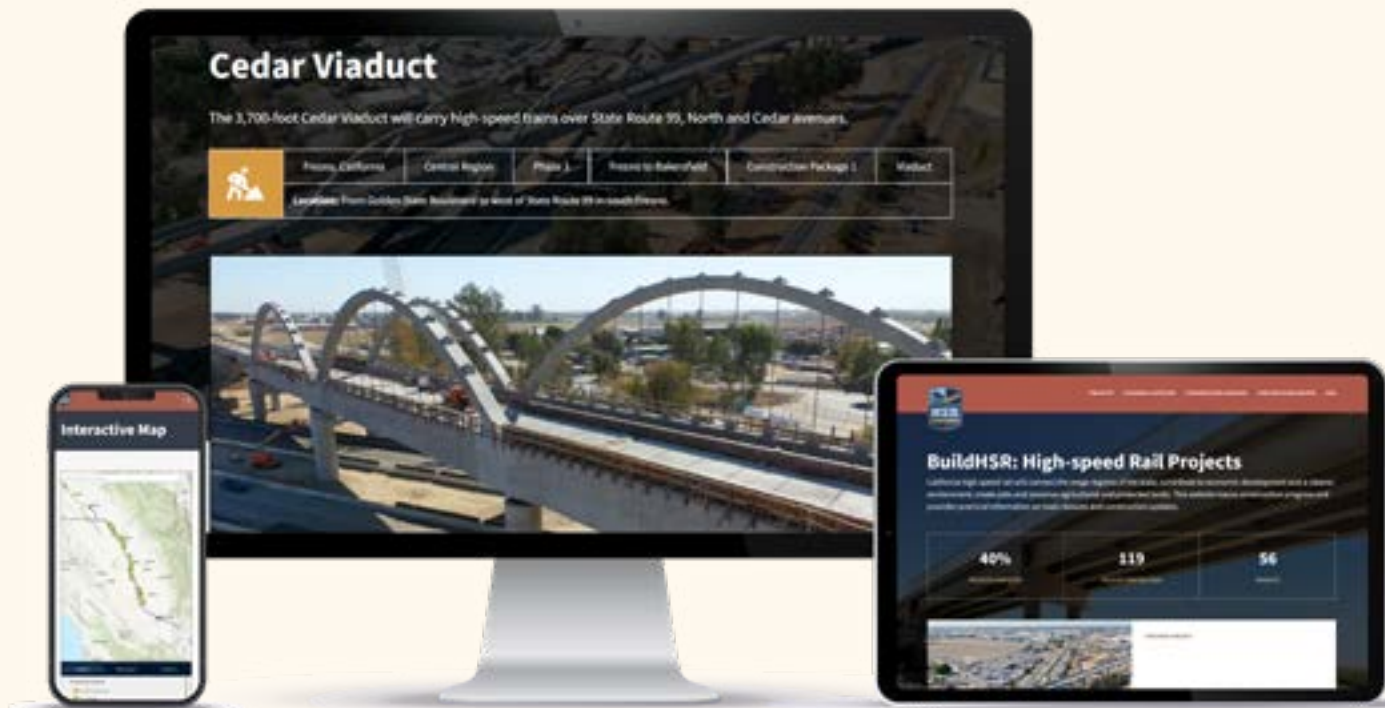
Over the last few months, the Authority has been celebrating various cultural awareness months, including [Women's History Month](#) and [Irish American Heritage Month](#) in March and [Arab American Heritage Month](#) in April. We put out a call for volunteers to highlight on social media to celebrate the events. Features in March included Chief of Strategic Communications [Melissa Figueroa](#), Chief Counsel [Alicia Fowler](#), Deputy Director of Legislation [Jane Brown](#) and Information Officer [Katta Hules](#). Looking ahead to May, we'll be recognizing Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month.

We also celebrated Earth Day on April 22! Sustainability is at the core of our work on one of the nation's greenest

infrastructure projects with 100% renewably powered high-speed rail. As part of our work to create a sustainable transportation system, we're delivering high-speed rail through cleaner construction. We currently use Tier 4 equipment in construction, which is the highest emission standard for equipment set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and have implemented a policy that requires contractors to only use zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) in their fleets in all future construction contracts. For Earth Day 2023, we showed off some of the technological advances in construction with examples of greener vehicles and equipment. Learn more about our [sustainability program](#) and follow our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to see those posts.



Build HSR Website Relaunch



There's a new way to follow the progress of the California High-Speed Rail program. We recently launched a redesigned and improved BuildHSR.com. The new site features pages dedicated to each of our projects under construction as well as those that have been completed. You can even search the projects by Construction Package, county or current status.

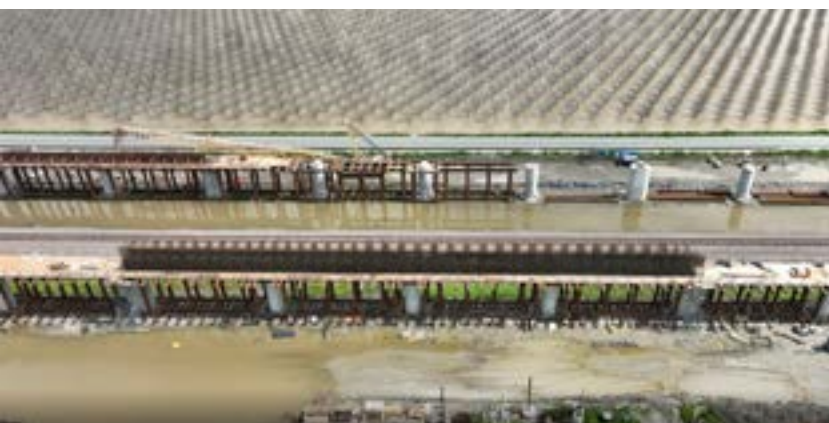
Find fast facts about the project, small business revenue, jobs created and the individual projects.

The site also features a new, redesigned interactive map to keep you up to date on project locations, road closures and detours and the ability to see the high-speed rail alignment at street level.



HELPING KINGS AND TULARE COUNTIES

LATEST VIDEOS: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEDRAIL



Unprecedented storms have had a significant impact on the surrounding communities of Kings and Tulare counties and on high-speed rail construction. While delivering the nation's first high-speed rail system is the top priority for the Authority, the safety of the surrounding communities comes first. The Authority and contractor Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture continue to work with local agencies to provide assistance and help mitigate the impacts on the nearby communities. The Authority has provided k-rail, embankment and equipment to help with road closures and to build levees to prevent flooding in certain areas. The Authority has also coordinated with local dairy farmers to use high-speed rail property to transport and relocate livestock. Crews also reopened Whitley Avenue, which was recently closed for high-speed rail construction, to serve as an additional evacuation route for City of Corcoran residents. The Authority continues to coordinate with these local agencies and are working to assess the short- and long-term challenges the flooding will have on the project and devise a strategy to move forward with construction in these areas.