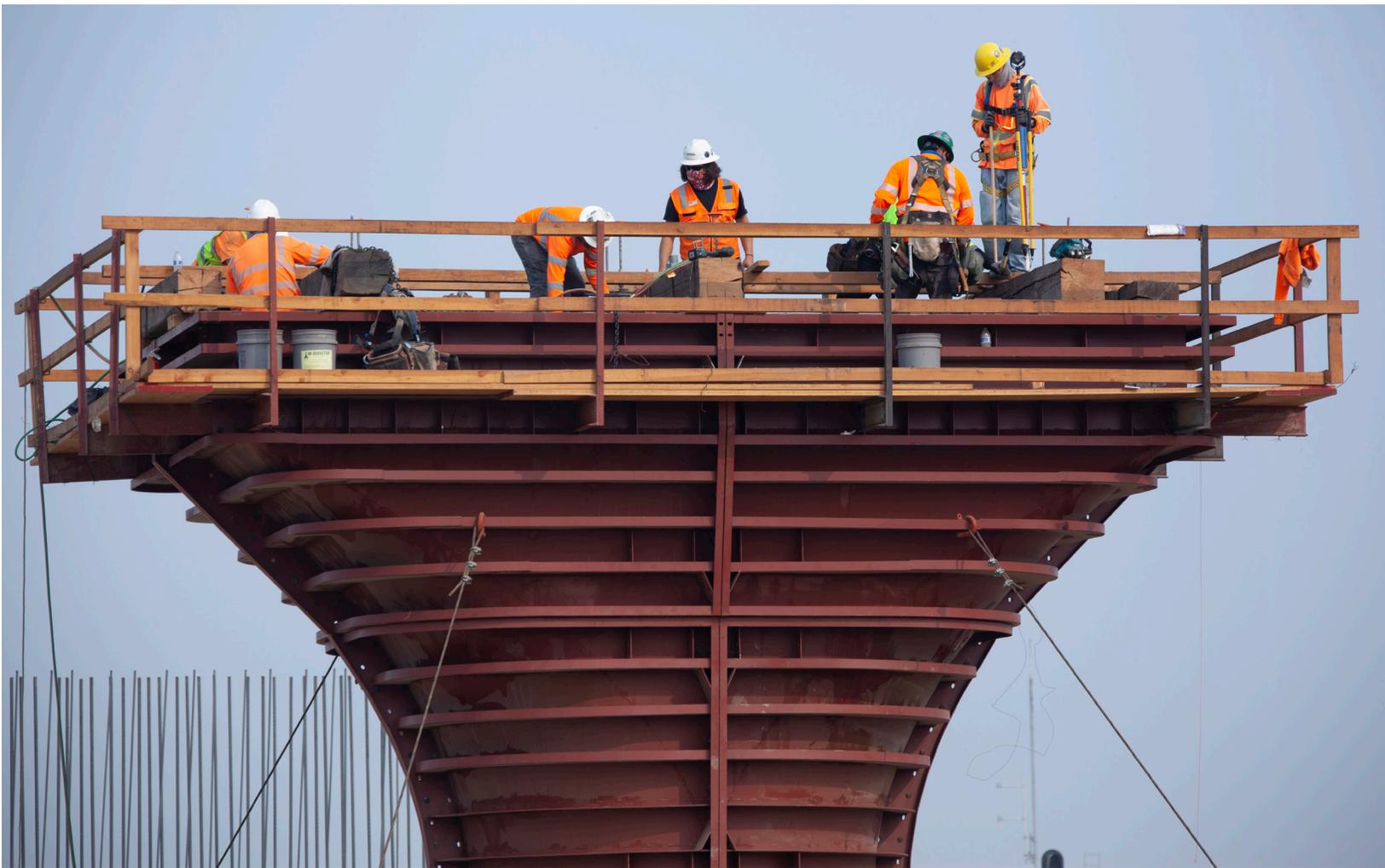


# Investing in California Small Businesses

SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 9: ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2021



## *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).

# Investing in California Small Business

**SMALL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1  
FEBRUARY 2021**

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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/](https://hsr.ca.gov/small_business/)

The *Investing in California Small Businesses* newsletter is published quarterly by the Office of Communications of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

To view past newsletters visit:

[https://hsr.ca.gov/small\\_business/newsletter.aspx](https://hsr.ca.gov/small_business/newsletter.aspx)

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## High-Speed Rail Starts the New Year With Confidence

Out with the old and in with the new! Goodbye 2020 and welcome 2021! The new year didn't come a moment too soon for most of us.

COVID-19 heightened stress and uncertainty for the high-speed rail program, but we kept pressing forward in 2020. In December, we passed a major milestone with 5,000 construction workers dispatched since construction began in the Central Valley. Nearly 77 percent of the workers hail from eight Central Valley counties. Good-paying jobs put food on their tables and the fact that they were making and spending money put much needed funds into city and county coffers.

Some California state lawmakers joined stakeholders when the **California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy** got an up-close look at high-speed rail construction in November. They visited the Hanford Viaduct, which is more than a mile long in Kings County, and the Avenue 88 Grade Separation near State Route 43 in Tulare County. Robbie Hunter, the **State Building and Construction Trades** President, talked to them about the important role that trade apprentices play on our project. They also heard from Authority Board Chair Tom Richards and Board Member Henry Perea.

I got a chance to tell people about our small business program and constant need for small business to join the project at the 7th Annual Women of Color Symposium in November. I participated in a virtual panel, which included a diverse group of women - a community college president, bank vice president, public affairs director for an oil and gas producer, and the head of a non-profit

"When stress levels peak, I find time to go to a quiet spot to reflect and give myself a pat on the back for being a great mother, worker and friend."

Catrina Blair  
Process and Program Development Chief  
California High-Speed Rail Authority

community action agency.

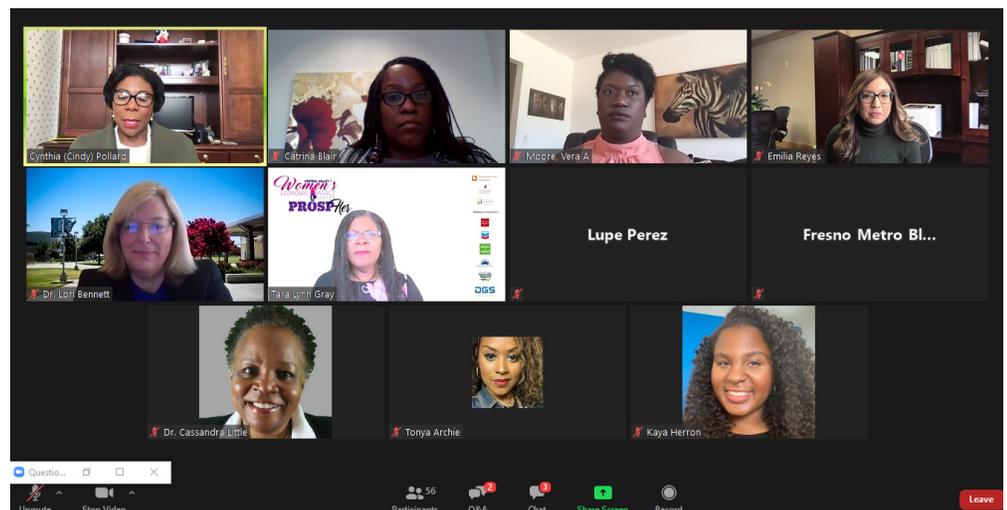
We talked about business, successful leadership styles and new challenges we faced during the corona virus pandemic. I explained when my stress levels peak, I find time to go to a quiet spot by myself to reflect and give myself a pat on the back for being a great mother, coworker and friend. That gives me the strength to dive back into my job and know

that I'm going to come out alright in the end.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the symposium hosted by **Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce** was held online. Members of our small business team were able to set up a virtual exhibit room where small business owners were able to drop by and find out how they could get a crack at joining the high-speed rail program.

They can also visit our new minority business dashboard which is part of our Small Business Program page on the Authority website. It gives the public a look at how minority-owned businesses are faring on our project.

We're also celebrating because the Authority snagged a national sustainability award from the **Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure**. In December, the institute said it tapped us for the **Envision** Platinum honor after an independent peer review group looked at our performance in 64 sustainability areas including community quality of life, environmental impacts, air pollution



In November, Small Business Advocate Catrina Blair (top row, 2nd from left) participated in a panel with a diverse group of women at the 7th Annual Women of Color Symposium hosted by the Fresno Metro Black Chamber. They discussed business, successful leadership styles and the challenge of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.



and greenhouse gas emissions.

The award comes on the heels of our Director of Planning and Sustainability Meg Cederoth participating in a virtual round table discussion for the **Rail Electrification Council of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association**. Meg talked about the sustainable benefits of high-speed rail. They include running on 100% renewable energy and recycling and reusing steel, concrete and other materials during construction. Leaders from BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway and Amtrak joined Meg in that lively conversation.

2021 arrived with high-speed rail working on 35 heavy construction sites in the Central Valley and an average of 1,200 construction workers being dispatched to those sites every day. That's a lot to be thankful for considering the uncertainty that reigned when the corona virus showed its unwelcome head a year ago. We start this new year with confidence that high-speed rail is moving forward in California and despite, or in spite of COVID-19, we love working on the railroad!!

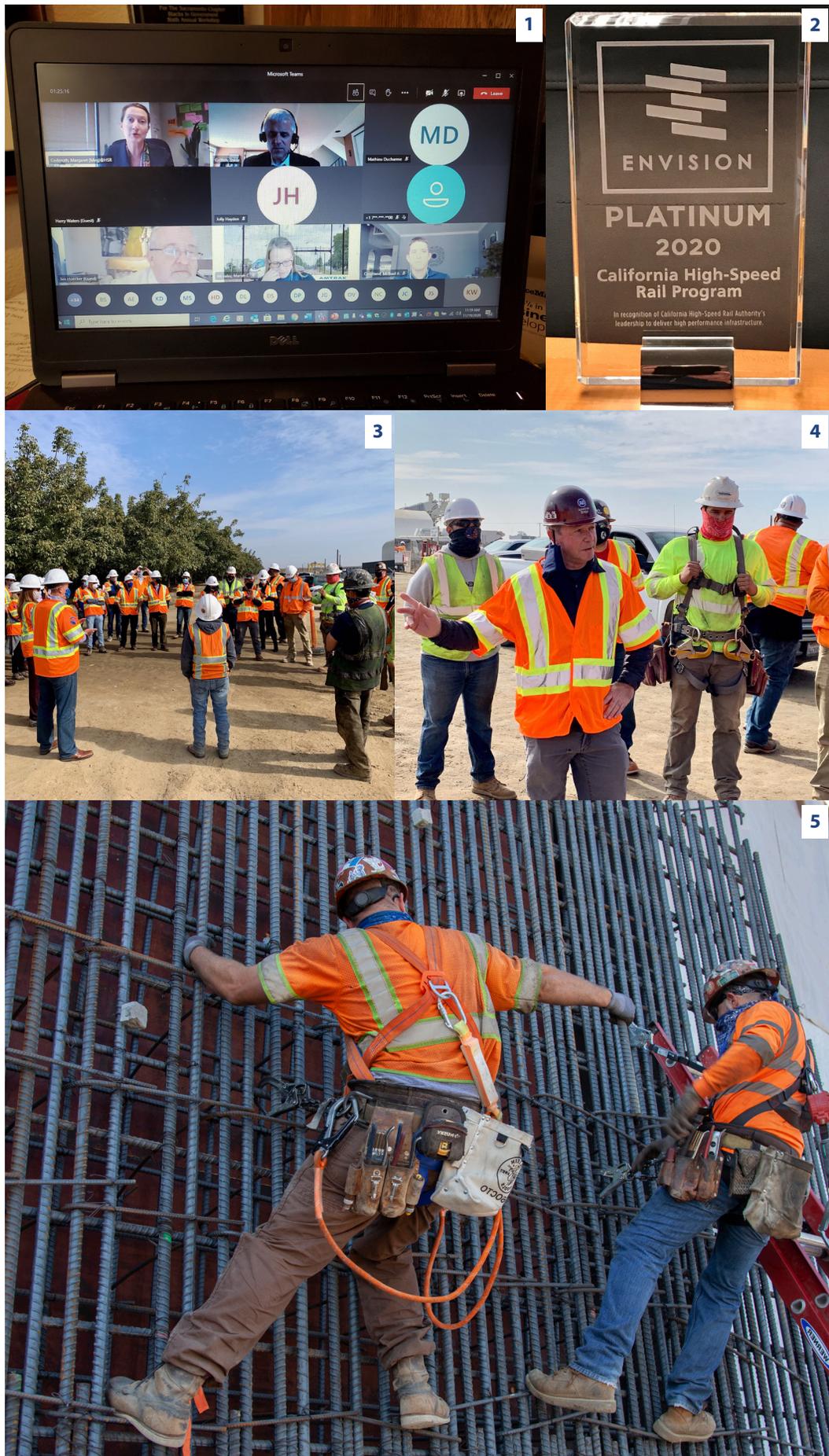
Catrina Blair

1. Director of Planning and Sustainability Meg Cederoth (top row, left) talked about plans to run high-speed rail on 100% renewable energy during a virtual round table discussion for the Rail Electrification Council of the National Electric Manufactures Association.

2. In December, the Authority received the **Envision Platinum** award from the **Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure**. We were chosen for performance in sustainability areas including environmental impacts, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

3. & 4. California lawmakers and stakeholders associated with the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy toured high-speed rail sites in the Central Valley. Robbie Hunter, the State Building and Construction Trades President (photo 4, 2nd from left), talked about how high-speed rail is putting people to work.

5. Ironworkers do a balancing act as they tie rebar on the side of the Wasco Viaduct south of the City of Wasco near Jackson Avenue. Since construction began, more than 5,000 construction workers have been dispatched to high-speed rail construction sites in the Central Valley.



# Small Business Events

**February 9, 2021**  
**California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting**  
11:00 AM  
Webcast Meeting Online

**April 22, 2021**  
**California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting**  
10:00 AM  
Webcast Meeting Online

**February 24, 2021**  
**Business Advisory Council**  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
Webcast Meeting Online

**May 12, 2021**  
**Business Advisory Council**  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
Webcast Meeting Online

**March 25, 2021**  
**California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting**  
10:00 AM  
Webcast Meeting Online

**May 20, 2021**  
**California High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meeting**  
10:00 AM  
Webcast Meeting Online



**February 11, 2021**  
**General Small Business Tax Workshop**  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Online Webinar

This workshop covers basic IRS tax requirements and best practices small businesses can use to avoid tax problems. Learn about record keeping and bookkeeping systems, business income and deductions, different types of entities, how to file and pay federal and state business taxes and more. Conducted by a tax professional in partnership with the IRS. (Photo courtesy of Kampus Production from Pexels)



**March 11, 2021**  
**How to do Business with the Federal Government**  
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
Online Webinar

Find out how to do business with the U.S. Federal Government, the largest single purchaser of goods and services in the world. It awards about \$500 billion in contracts every year. It buys everything from furniture to office equipment and supplies. It procures janitorial, medical and grounds keeping services, and more. Hosted by **California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)**.



**March 23-24, 2021**  
**ITE Technical Conference**  
11:30 AM – 5:30 PM EDT (8:30 AM – 2:30 PM PDT)  
Online Technical Conference

The Institute of Transportation Engineers will host a conference on Innovative Intersections and Streets. The two-day event will focus on new and innovative solutions to transportation challenges being implemented in communities across the U.S. and around the world. Registration: \$125 - \$199. Group discounts available. (Photo courtesy of ITE)

## Did You Know?

As part of the Authority's commitment to transparency, we have published the recent payments to our top 10 prime contractors on the homepage of [hsr.ca.gov](http://hsr.ca.gov) under **Major Contractors Payments**. This decision is designed to better keep our small business partners in the loop on payments while providing another opportunity for public oversight. The payments were made to the three design-builders delivering the three construction packages in the Central Valley, the three project and construction management teams for those construction packages and the four regional consultants helping us environmentally clear sections of high-speed rail in Northern California and Southern California. The publicization of these payments came at the request of the small business community and our Business Advisory Council, which provides essential input and advisement to the Authority. Our small business partners are crucial in helping us deliver California's high-speed rail system and we appreciate their continued support and counsel.



**Great Britain High-Speed Rail Under Construction:** Great Britain has started building **High Speed 2 (HS2)**, a new high-speed rail system. The line will connect London to Birmingham, with two separate lines branching from Birmingham to both Manchester and Leeds. The entire system will span 330 miles with trains running up to 225 miles per hour. Currently, crews are building **Phase 1** of the project between London and Birmingham. Service on Phase 1 is expected to begin between 2028 to 2031. (Photo rendering courtesy of Arup)



**Palmdale Transit Area Specific Plan:** The move to build a high-speed rail station took a major step forward when Palmdale City Council members said yes to the **Palmdale Transit Area Specific Plan**. The plan lays out how land can be developed on nearly 750 acres surrounding a future station that will eventually serve high-speed rail, Metrolink, Amtrak, Greyhound, Brightline West and local transit. The community helped develop the plan along with junior high and high school students. (Photo courtesy of the City of Palmdale)



**Shinkansen Technology Coming to Texas:** **Texas Central Railroad** has received approval from the Federal Railroad Administration for a high-speed rail system to connect Dallas and Houston in 90 minutes. The proposed system would utilize one of the latest versions of Shinkansen bullet trains from Japan. The **Central Japan Railway Company**, which operates the Tokaido Shinkansen line, intends to export its new N700S series trains for the Texas system. The N700S is one of the fastest trains in the world, with speeds reaching upwards of 220 mph. Construction on the Texas system is expected to begin in 2021, with an estimated timeline of 6 years and cost of \$20 billion. (Photo courtesy of Kyodo News)

# Sagent Marketing Focuses on Socially, Environmentally Friendly Clients

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? When Anne Staines launched a small business out of her Sacramento home in 2004, she asked herself that very question.

"My answer was to start a marketing agency that provides marketing support only for socially and environmentally positive programs," said Staines, President, CEO and founder of Sacramento-based **Sagent Marketing**. "I wanted to start an agency that has a positive and empowering work culture, supports and nurtures our team, and delivers measurable results to clients."

Staines' first challenge - attracting talented people who would be willing to work from her backyard pool house. She figured her passion for marketing and advertising and 25 years of experience would help her convince potential employees that she could provide them with a better place to work than anywhere else.

"So we created a very supportive culture and offered benefits better than other agencies," she said, recalling how one of her goals was for the firm to not grow so much that it

"High-speed rail will help transform communities currently cut off from high-paying jobs because of distance."

Anne Staines  
Owner  
Sagent Marketing



would have to move. "By the time we had seven people working in about 500 square feet, I knew I had to reconsider."

Staines eventually found what she described as the perfect building in midtown Sacramento, a national historic registry home converted to an office, with a large backyard where everyone still has outdoor meetings in proximity to nature.

Today, Sagent, a certified Small Business,

has 19 employees and counts the California High-Speed Rail Authority among its notable clients. Specifically, the firm provides marketing and branding services for the Authority's Early Train Operator, **DB Engineering & Consulting USA**. Staines said the work focuses largely on market research to help ensure the service and physical amenities of future high-speed trains and stations will meet the needs and expectations of riders.

"We're doing research among potential riders to understand what their preferred travel experiences and amenities would be," said Staines, who added an in-house person to help deliver the extra work. "We've also contributed to budget modeling for future communications programs to reach prospective riders."

The added high-speed rail work has resulted in substantial work for a few employees at a market research subcontractor, she said.

"Working on high-speed rail has enhanced our reputation for expertise in the transportation sector, and it has definitely opened other



1. When Anne Staines launched Sagent Marketing out of her Sacramento home in 2004, she decided to focus on clients with socially and environmentally positive programs.

2. Sagent Marketing President/CEO Anne Staines (2nd row, left) stands masked and socially distanced in solidarity with her staff behind the historic midtown Sacramento building where her firm works.

3. Sagent Marketing has developed ads designed to keep highway workers and motorists safe in highway work zones. Their work is part of the California Department of Transportation "Be Work Zone Alert" and "Move Over Law" safety campaigns. (Photo courtesy of Caltrans)

doors for us,” Staines said. She added that Sagent also works with many other public agencies in an effort to create healthier, safer and more sustainable communities.

One of the firm’s most visible campaigns is for the **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)**. Sagent leads a **statewide public outreach campaign** to educate and motivate people to take action to help protect themselves, their families and their property from wildfire.

Sagent has also taken the lead on the **California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) “Be Work Zone Alert”** and **“Move Over Law”** safety campaigns. They’re designed to keep highway workers and motorists safe in highway work zones or when Caltrans, law enforcement, emergency vehicles or tow trucks are stopped on the road with amber lights flashing.

As for high-speed rail, Staines is proud to be part of such an important project that will mean sustainable transportation for decades to come.

“High-speed rail will help transform communities currently cut off from high-paying jobs because of distance,” she said. “I am very excited about the possibility of being able to help launch high-speed rail to the public.”

Micah Flores

1. Employees for Sagent Marketing gather for a brain storming session where creativity is encouraged.

2. At a Sagent Marketing Lunch and Learn session, workers tune into a U.S. Small Business Association Twitter Chat on how to work smarter by using technology.

3. Employees get to do a lot of things to reduce stress and promote a family atmosphere at Sagent Marketing such as working in their pajamas at the office.

4. When COVID-19 forced Sagent Marketing employees to work from home, they still had fun. During the holidays, they showed off “gratitude stockings” they made.

\*Some photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements



# Southern California Firm Engineers Success

California high-speed rail is benefiting from decades of engineering expertise at **IDC Consulting Engineers, Inc. (IDC)** under the leadership of principals Dr. Xiaoyun Wu and Wendy Li, PE.

Founded in 1995 by Wu, IDC and its small team of 20 experts have been hard at work, from meticulously checking the design of the **Hanford Viaduct** in Kings County, to the **LINK US project** for Los Angeles Union Station, among others.

The Hanford Viaduct required double-time days, careful calculations and powerful computers—especially when verifying the designed interaction between the track and structure. “It has been one of the most rewarding experiences,” Wu said. “We are making history.”

Wu recalled how the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake played a role in her career. The 6.9 quake rocked the San Francisco Bay area causing \$6 billion in damage. It was the major catalyst for Wu to advance her knowledge of

“At IDC, no project is too small or too big for us. Be truthful and be committed. When things get tough, take one step at a time and never give up.”

Xiaoyun Wu, Ph.D.  
Principal/Owner  
IDC Consulting Engineers, Inc.

seismic engineering. At the time, she was on a full scholarship studying for her doctorate at the University of Southern California. She had previously studied at Fuzhou University with Li and helped China develop their seismic standards.

Wu went on to help with the state’s bridge



**IDC Consulting Engineers, Inc.**

seismic retrofit program, leading specifically on engineering aspects of two of the massive toll bridges in the Bay Area.

The fast-paced work was everything she was looking for. “I found my passion and purpose in life. The rest is history,” she said. And in 2012, Wu convinced Li to bring her extensive expertise on public projects to IDC.

“IDC is like a big family to many of us,” explained Li.

As a small, disadvantaged, minority and women-owned business enterprise, there have always been challenges. And now, with COVID-19 restrictions in place, IDC engineers are separated, working from home, and work on some subcontracts has slowed down.

Despite that, high-speed rail has made the firm stronger. “High-speed rail helped us survive [the pandemic] and helped us grow,”



**1.** IDC Consulting Engineers founder Xiaoyun Wu was in graduate school when the Loma Prieta earthquake rocked the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989. She eventually worked on California’s seismic retrofit program and helped do engineering designs for two Bay Area toll bridges.

**2.** Engineer Wendy Li is a principal at IDC Consulting Engineers. She joined the company after 10 years as a project manager at the California Department of Transportation. She was also the head of programming at the regional transportation planning agency for San Bernardino County.

said Li. Since work on the project began, the company has grown from 13 to 20 employees.

Figuratively and literally, IDC is building bridges. “At IDC, no project is too small or too big for us,” said Wu. At the beginning of the pandemic, IDC joined with the **International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association** to send masks to public agencies and front-line workers.

Whatever the future holds, their ethos guides them. “Be truthful and be committed. When things get tough, take one step at a time and never give up,” Wu declared.

Kyle Simerly

**1. & 2.** IDC Consulting Engineers had a team of people working on calculations for the Hanford Viaduct. Employees worked overtime, especially when verifying the designed interaction between the track and structure. Construction workers have made the company’s designs for the Hanford Viaduct come to life. While one crew hoisted concrete forms for columns into place, bulldozers rumbled nearby grading the ground for more columns.

**3.** IDC Consulting Engineers was also selected to work on Metro’s \$2 billion Crenshaw/LAX Line. The company designed two aerial guideways for the project. The project is bringing rail back to Crenshaw Boulevard for the first time since the 1950s. Recently, Metro began testing new light rail trains over I-405. (Photo courtesy of Metro)

**4.** Construction on the Crenshaw/LAX Line has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic because it was categorized as “essential” by Governor Newsom. Some of the most recent work includes canopies for ticket vending machines at the Hyde Park Station near Inglewood. When completed, the 8-mile line will link Los Angeles International Airport to the regional rail network. (Photo courtesy of Metro)



1



2



3



4

# I Will Ride Relaunches Student Outreach

As college students returned home to complete classes online, they were joined by the California High-Speed Rail Authority's **I Will Ride** student outreach program. In November, dozens of students, teachers and education professionals took part in the **"Building Student Partnerships" webinar**. Some may have been surprised to see Authority CEO Brian Kelly, Vice Board Chair Nancy Miller and Chief of Strategic Communications Melissa Figueroa leading the call to get the program back on track.

Miller began the event with a moving welcome and pointed out that students and young professionals are seldom exposed to different levels of opportunities in their intended careers, and it's especially true for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. "I remember seeing professionals such as executive leaders or board members and wondering how they got there," Miller admitted. "I Will Ride at the Authority is the opportunity to take a closer look at those professional paths and gain a better understanding of how they got to where they are."

Panelist Kielan Rathjen told listeners an interest in transportation, climate change and economic development prompted him to join I Will Ride at the University of California, Berkeley. He became the chapter president and toured Central Valley high-speed rail construction sites and where trains will eventually stop at the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco. "It really showed me how complex government projects come together," he said. "[I learned] how you work with contractors that build projects, how you deal with political changes and how the

federal and state government come together to make a project work."

After graduation, Rathjen landed a job at the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). He touted I Will Ride as a major reason why. "It was the first time I got to take a bite out of the apple of state government service and it put me in the direction of wanting to work for the state."

Kelly added that youth and student participation is important not only for high-speed rail but all aspects of government. "Students are a key part of movements for change. Your generation, in my view, has a better sense of the importance and the urgency of policy that addresses climate change," he said. "Your advocacy can make sure that we do things better and smarter. Sustainability and economics must be aspects of the policy decisions that we make around the environment."

Kelly provided a project overview and discussed construction projects underway in the Central Valley. He also talked about bookend projects in Northern and Southern California and plans to finish environmental clearance by 2022 for Phase 1 of the project from San Francisco to Los Angeles.



**1.** Dozens of students, teachers and education professionals logged onto Zoom and took part in the "Building Student Partnerships" webinar in November. It marked the restart of the Authority's I Will Ride Campaign which is designed to inform students about high-speed rail.

**2.** Student Engagement Specialist Yaqeline Castro (top) and Public Information Office Augie Blancas (bottom) organized the I Will Ride webinar and participated as panelists.

“[I learned] how you work with contractors that build projects, how you deal with political changes and how the federal and state government come together to make a project work.”

Kielan Rathjen  
Zero Emission Vehicle Market Development  
GO-Biz

The webinar wrapped up with a question-and-answer session for panelists and details about how students and young professionals can join the I Will Ride program.

Yaqeline Castro

**1.** Kielan Rathjen was a webinar panelist. The former president of the I Will Ride chapter at UC Berkeley told listeners his time with the group helped groom him for his current government job with the Zero Emission Vehicle Market Development unit at GO-Biz.

**2.** California High-Speed Rail Authority CEO Brian Kelly (right) gave webinar participants an overview of the high-speed rail program. He also conducted surveys during his time in front of the microphone.

**3 & 4.** In 2019, about 50 people attended I Will Ride Day in Fresno. They heard from engineering professionals about building high-speed rail in the Central Valley. Event participants also got an up-close look at construction when they took a tour of high-speed rail sites.

\*Some photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements



# New Web Page Does Deep Dive into Minority-Owned Firms

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has launched a [new web page](#) that gives the public more detailed information about small businesses working on the high-speed rail program. The new page, which is part of the Small Business Program portion of our web-site, tracks minority-owned businesses.

“We designed the new minority-owned small business dashboard in an effort to improve the Authority’s commitment to transparency and accountability,” explained Process and Program Development Chief Catrina Blair. “The small business community, prime contractors and the public will be able to see at a glance how well we’re meeting our small business goals.”

The dashboard has a lot of user-friendly information such as how many minority-owned small businesses are working on the high-speed rail program, what percentage they make up of the total number of small businesses and how much they have earned to date. The information is part of our commitment to transparency and accountability.

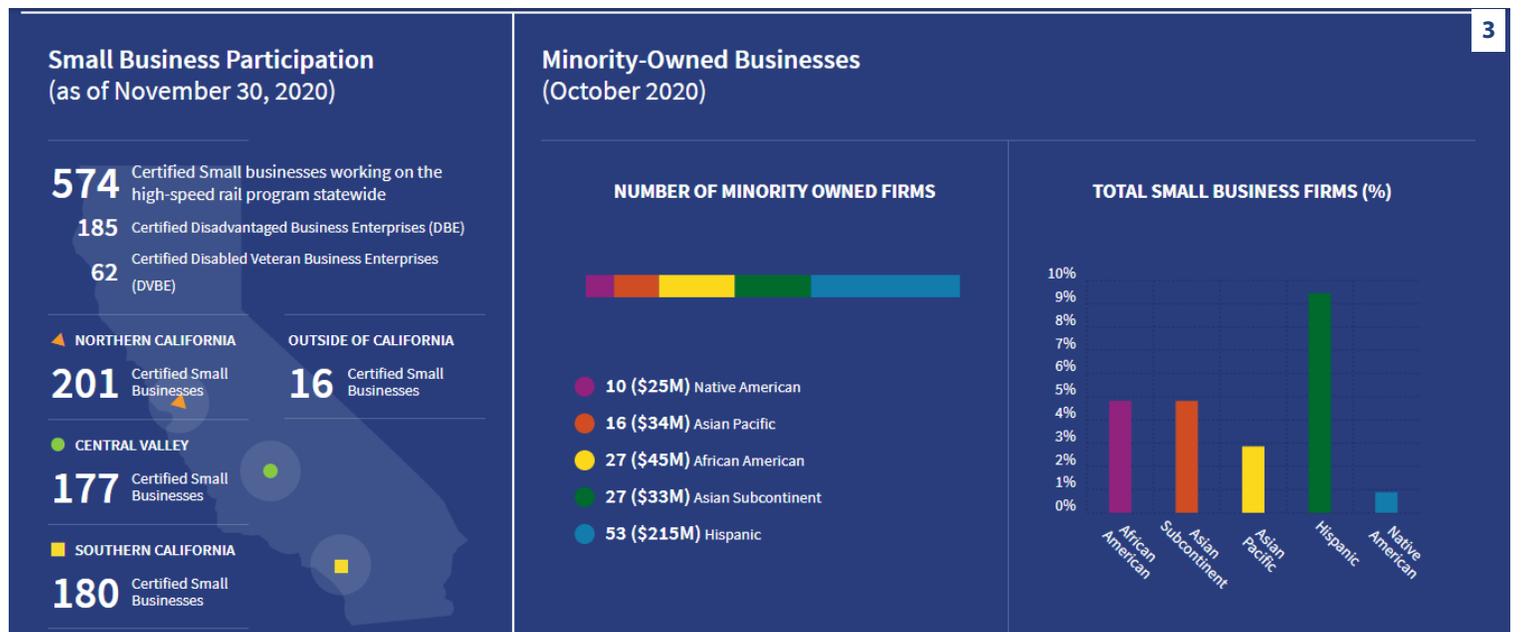
The page also shows there are 574 small businesses working on the project. That includes 54 Hispanic-owned firms, 16 Asian Subcontinent-owned companies, 28 Black-owned businesses, 28 Asian Pacific-owned firms and 5 companies owned by Native Americans.

The Authority’s aggressive 30% participation goal for small businesses includes a 3% participation goal for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE) and a 10% participation goal for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), which are owned by women and ethnic minorities.

Karen Massie



1. Engineer Walter Allen (left) owns Acumen. The firm is working on a fare collection system for the high-speed rail project. Allen has already designed smart card systems for the Bay Area Rapid Transit and other transit systems around the U.S.
2. Genoveva Arellano (left) has worked on the high-speed rail project since 1998 when her company, Arellano Associates, landed a contract. Her team does public outreach associated with environmental approval for project sections in Southern California.
3. The Authority has launched a new webpage that tracks minority-owned small businesses participating in California’s high-speed rail program. It allows the public to see how much those firms have earned to date.



# Where's That Business Plan?

In late 2020, the Authority, the Newsom administration and California legislative leadership agreed to release an updated business plan by February 9, 2021. There will 30 days for additional public comments. Currently, we plan to end the comment period by March 12, 2021 and send the Final Business Plan to the state legislature by April 15, 2021 for oversight hearings. The updated draft plan is expected to:

- Define COVID-19 program impacts and where we stand;
- Provide a full description of risk-assessed costs, schedule, scope and revenues for current work;
- Plan for “closing the books” on the 119-mile Central Valley construction and track and systems installation and clearing environmental documents statewide, including close-out costs and schedule estimates;
- Strategize for moving beyond the Initial Construction Segment to early operable options and statewide advancement of the program;
- Display strategies that demonstrate important lessons learned from early program experience to be applied to future work;
- Include a greater focus on risk and risk management, including the establishment of a Risk Committee and an Enterprise Risk Manager;



The revised Draft Business Plan will discuss risk for the high-speed rail program. That includes the impacts of COVID-19 on construction workers and other personnel. Last year, the coronavirus resulted in 104 days of lost work and 244 workers quarantined. The pandemic also delayed the release of the Track and Systems contract and the Business Plan.

- Incorporate methodical, incremental, disciplined program advancement; and
- Build in implementation of “Stage Gate” process on future procurements.

The Business Plan and its supporting documents will be available at <https://hsr.ca.gov>.

Annie Parker

# Environmental Work on Track

As we look forward to the major environmental milestones that are coming up this year, we recognize that the effects of the COVID pandemic continue to be very much with us. The Authority will continue to host virtual community meetings and open houses in support of our environmental documents. At the same time, we'll work with our partners regionally and statewide to host in-person events when it is safe to do so.

The Authority is on track to release several final Environmental Impact Reports/Environmental Impact Statements (EIR/EIS) this year. Currently, the final EIR/EIS for the **Bakersfield to Palmdale**, **San Francisco to San Jose** and **San Jose to Merced** project sections are due to be issued this spring, and the final EIR/

EIS for the **Burbank to Los Angeles** project section is due in the summer.

Updates on the Draft EIR/EIS for the **Los Angeles to Anaheim** and **Palmdale to Burbank** project sections will be in the revised 2020 business plan due out by February 9.

This is the continuation of work that kicked off in 2020 to complete the environmental review process that will identify the final route of high-speed rail from San Francisco down to the Los Angeles/Anaheim area.

Although COVID-19 has changed the way we do business, we remain committed to ensuring

that these project sections are ready so we can start construction as soon as possible when additional funds become available.

Annie Parker



The Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco will be the northern terminus of Phase 1 of the high-speed rail system. The transit center features a beautiful rooftop park that stretches four blocks, art installations and thousands of plants and trees arranged in unique ecosystems. Visitors can dine at several restaurants and shop at retail outlets. Currently, passengers can board buses at the center. Eventually, they will be able to catch Caltrain and high-speed rail trains there.

# Journey to Become an Ironworker in California

After high school, Alfredo Jimenez was at a crossroads.

"I started working out of high school, and I knew college wasn't for me," said Jimenez when talking about his journey to the becoming an ironworker. "I wanted to start a career, not just have a job. So, I took the opportunity to educate myself on what this trade was about."

Ironworkers are essential in transportation, including high-speed rail. Ironworkers are responsible for fabricating and reinforcing iron and steel to form the framework of bridges, buildings and other structures.

Many ironworkers earn while they learn, starting by becoming an apprentice. For Jimenez, being an apprentice has taken him

"I wanted to start a career, not just have a job. So, I took the opportunity to educate myself on what this trade was about."

Alfredo Jimenez  
Ironworker Apprentice  
Construction Packager 2-3

across California over the last four years. Now, with Martinez Steel, Jimenez has worked on several structures in Construction Package 2-3 between Fresno and Kings counties.

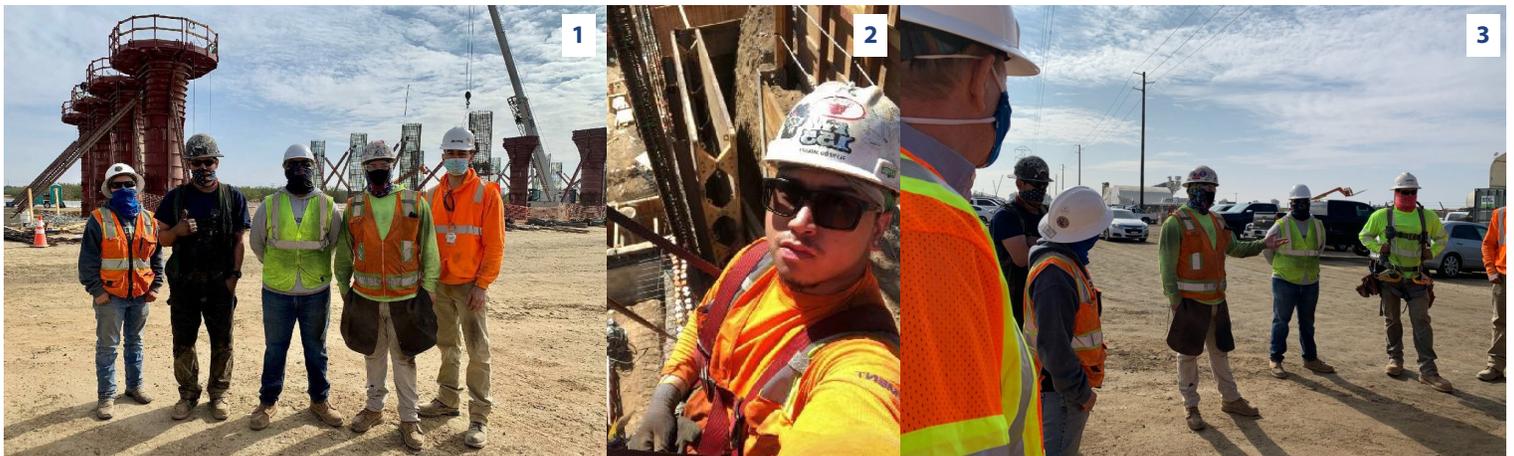
Becoming a journeyman ironworker requires at least four years of on-the-job training.

"You get to gain all the knowledge from the people who have been doing this for years," added Jimenez about his experience in the field. "Working on high-speed rail has opened my eyes to see how beautiful it is when you see the sun beaming through the iron columns that you've built, knowing what I've built will be here years after I've walked and worked this earth."

Now, at the tail end of his apprenticeship, what's next for Jimenez?

"Sky's the limit," he says.

Augie Blancas



1. After high school, apprentice Alfredo Jimenez (2nd from right) started on his journey to become an ironworker. He has spent four years in the trade traveling around California. He explained his career allows him to earn as he learns.

2. As an employee of Martinez Steel, Alfredo Jimenez has worked on several high-speed rail structures in Construction Package 2-3 between Fresno and Kings counties.

3. Alfredo Jimenez talked about his job and working on high-speed rail when elected officials and other stakeholders toured high-speed rail construction sites in the Central Valley.

# Building High-Speed Rail from the Bottom Up

The biggest myth about being an ironworker is that it's easy. It's not. It takes physical strength and mental prowess - and that's just getting through the apprenticeship.

Bryan Berber became interested in becoming an ironworker apprentice after talking to his uncle, a journeyman ironworker for more than 15 years. Hearing his uncle's experiences intrigued him, but he was warned that not everyone was cut out for the job. Berber was excited to accept the challenge.

A Chicago native, Berber has worked in the construction industry since high school and decided to become an apprentice earlier this year. He's now an ironworker apprentice with Martinez Steel, a subcontractor of Dragados-Flatiron Joint Venture in Construction Package 2-3. He's among more than 5,000 workers that have been dispatched to build high-speed rail in California.

"[Ironworkers] are the foundation of every building. It's motivating to know that you're building the skeleton and you know everything that went into the structure and built it from the bottom up," said Berber.

Becoming an ironworker has provided him and many others with another foundation to stand on - a lucrative career.

According to Build California, an ironworker apprentice earns about \$23 an hour. After four years of on-the-job training, a journey-

**1.** Ironworker apprentice Bryan Berber (bottom of cage) works on steel rebar that will be filled with concrete to form columns for a high-speed rail bridge in the Central Valley.

**2.** Bryan Berber admitted being an ironworker is hard, but the pay is great. As an apprentice, he earns about \$23 an hour. When he becomes a journeyman, his salary can jump to \$41 an hour.

"It's hard but try it and see for yourself. You just might end up loving it."

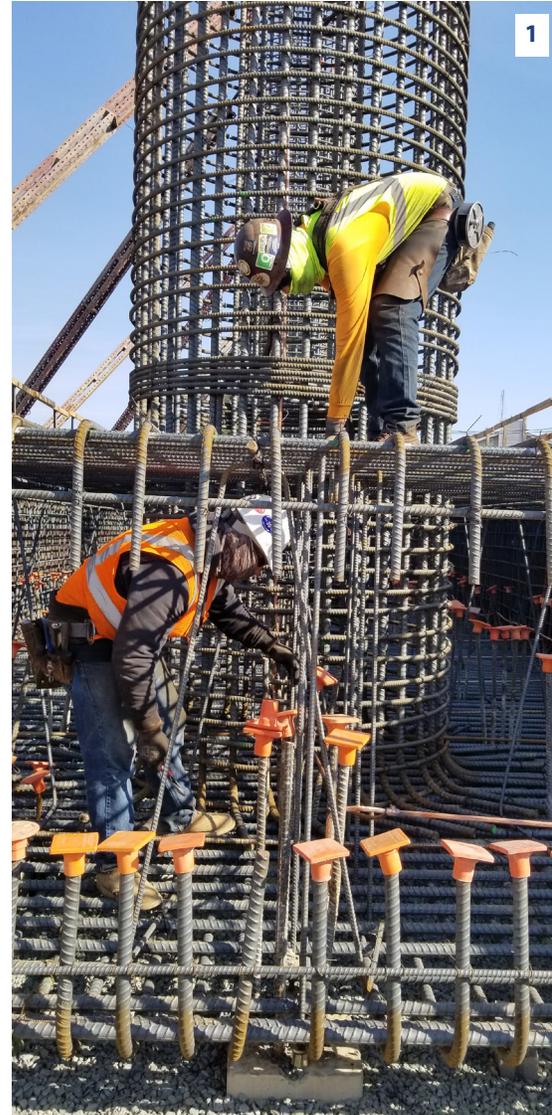
Bryan Berber  
Ironworker Apprentice  
Construction Package 2-3

man can earn about \$41 an hour.

"The training pushes you to your breaking point every week," said Berber of his training. "You have to be prepared and aware of your environment every day, every second, because it's dangerous work. Just know that people will tell you that. It's hard but try it and see for yourself. You just might end up loving it."

To learn more about what it takes to be an ironworker and other careers, visit Build California's website at [buildcalifornia.com](http://buildcalifornia.com).

Augie Blancas



# Authority Enters 2021 with New Environmental Director

Old things can become new again. Just ask Serge Stanich. "I am new to working with the Authority as a state employee, but I have been working with the California High-Speed Rail Program since 2015," explained Stanich. Last November, Governor Newsom appointed him as the Authority's Director of Environmental Services.

Prior to his time with high-speed rail, Stanich worked as the Senior Conservation Planner and Business Development Manager at **Westervelt Ecological Services**, a small business that successfully bid on a \$48.9 million contract in 2015 for environmental mitigation work in the Fresno to Bakersfield project section of high-speed rail. The work includes preserving sensitive wildlife habitat and minimizing or making up for impacts construction will have on the environment.

At **WSP**, the Authority's Rail Delivery Partner, Stanich served as Senior Permitting Manager and Program Director. From 2014 to 2015, he held several positions at HDR, a design firm specializing in engineering, architecture, environmental and construction services. He worked for Great Eastern Ecology as Vice President of Operations and Senior Managing Scientist. "I've been working in environmental consulting helping to provide environmental clearances for infrastructure projects since the mid-1990s," said Stanich.

When he's not working, Stanich enjoys hiking and fly-fishing. "It requires a lot of focus and being very present in the moment for when the fish takes the fly," he said. "There is so much that is so peaceful and regenerative about a hike in the woods, a fresh mountain stream and being fully present in a moment of nature."



In November, Governor Newsom appointed Serge Stanich as the Authority's Director of Environmental Services. He brings years of experience to the post. He worked on the high-speed rail program for companies that have contracts with the Authority for almost 6 years. Stanich said he wants "to provide the Authority with a robust environmental protection program that serves the agency and the public." He also enjoys time outdoors fly-fishing and has pictures to prove he has caught some big fish.

"I want to partner with regulatory agencies that oversee [environmental] laws to ensure that our project is compliant and delivers the program in a responsible, cost efficient and timely manner."

Serge Stanich  
Director of Environmental Services  
California High-Speed Rail Authority

As for what he hopes to accomplish in his new job with the Authority, he said, "My goals will be to provide the Authority with a robust environmental protection program that serves the agency and the public. I want to partner with the regulatory agencies that oversee these laws to ensure that our project is compliant and delivers the program in a responsible, cost efficient and timely manner."

Stanich is jazzed about staying with the high-speed rail program. "I don't think I could work on another project that is as important and as transformative to California and the nation as high-speed rail," he explained. "I am not against personal vehicles, but the benefits of high-speed rail are significant. The experience of travel is so incredibly luxurious that once high-speed rail is in place, people will be unable to imagine life without it and will wonder why it took so long."

Karen Massie

# Entertainment Veteran Educates Small Businesses on Winning Ways

“It is a selfless job that doesn’t pay well. You have to do it because you love the work and the community it serves.”

Jay King  
CEO/President  
California Black Chamber of Commerce

“There was a possibility everything would change if a new president [came in] with no sense of what was going on and where the issues really were,” declared Jay King, President and CEO of the **California Black Chamber of Commerce**.

That was position King found himself in when he took the reins of the chamber in 2019 following the death of founder Aubry Stone. Many people were about to learn that King, a music industry veteran, knows a lot about business.

He grew up in Northern California and was only 24 when his independent record label released the Timex Social Club’s hit “**Rumors**.” It was chart-topper - the biggest selling single of 1986. He followed that up as founder of **Club Nouveau**. The R&B group had multiple hits including the Grammy award winning platinum single “**Lean On Me**.”

While keeping control of his publishing rights and song catalog, King went on to write for, produce, manage or tour with many other groups including Con Funk Shun, Cameo, Chante Moore, Vanilla Ice and Madonna.

“I’ve learned if the success of your business is centered solely or mostly about you, you don’t have a real business,” King explained. “A real business is able to function, thrive and grow whether you’re still there or not.”

He brought that philosophy to the helm of the California Black Chamber and he eagerly shares his knowledge. Small businesses owners and individuals have joined the Financial Literacy Group he began some years ago. They can hear him dissect a variety of topics weekday mornings on the **Jay King Network**, an online radio platform that started airing in 2009. He also does afternoon drive-time in the Sacramento area on the chamber’s **97.5 KDEE Radio**.

He spoke about joining the mentoring and career-planning program called the African American Male Initiative at Highlands Community Charter School. He said, “It’s the first time I’ve seen an education and training venture that not only sees Black men through the process but ensures their success at the end of the program.” The chamber is also involved in a welding program that teaches a trade to students and community members.

King maintained the chamber’s seat on the California High-Speed Rail Authority’s Business Advisory Council. He pointed out,



CALIFORNIA BLACK  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Dedicated to Economic Empowerment*



Many people may have been surprised when Jay King took over the reins of the California Black Chamber of Commerce in 2019. He had spent over 30 years in the music industry as a singer, songwriter, producer and manager for himself and many other groups. Now, the entertainment veteran is schooling others on how to make their businesses a success.

“Being on the council helps our members because we get first-hand information on state contracts coming down the pike, the certification process and how to effectively bid for a contract.”

The music industry is still King’s major money maker. His work with the chamber is a labor of love. “It is a selfless job that doesn’t pay well. You have to do it because you love the work and the community it serves,” he explained.

But the main advice he imparts to anyone willing to listen is what 30 years as a businessman has taught him.

“Relationships are the most important tool you’ll have in your business tool kit. So cherish them, nourish them and respect them. They’ll be what keeps you alive when you’re stuck in the weeds.”

Karen Massie

**1.** Jay King (3rd from right) was in his mid-20’s when his R&B group, Club Nouveau, brought home a Grammy Award for their version of Bill Withers’ song “Lean On Me.” From there, King went on to work with other groups including Con Funk Shun, Cameo, Vanilla Ice and Madonna.

**2.** Jay King (right) still loves doing music. In 2019, he traveled to Concord with members of Club Nouveau for the Stone Soul Concert. In the Sacramento area, the public can hear him in the afternoon on 97.5 KDEE Radio. He also discusses a variety of topics weekday mornings on the Jay King Network, an online radio platform that started airing in 2009.

**3.** The California Black Chamber of Commerce said Jay King will continue to host the Annual Legislative Reception and Policy Luncheon. Prior to becoming the chamber’s President and CEO, King hosted a Financial Literacy Group. The group has expanded over the last year. King has also launched “**Everybody Pitch In,**” a crowd-fundraising campaign to assist and save small Black-owned businesses in California.

\*Some photos taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing requirements



# Bay Area Voters Ride to Caltrain's Rescue

It calls itself the seventh largest commuter railroad in the country and the largest carrier of bikes on any transit system in the country.

But like transit agencies nationwide, **Caltrain** is struggling since the COVID-19 pandemic caused ridership numbers to plunge to precipitously low levels. Gladly, the agency is breathing a sigh of relief since voters in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties threw the agency a lifeline by approving Measure RR in November.

With no dedicated funding source, 70% of the Bay Area transit system's revenue came from rider fares. The 30-year ballot measure is expected to yield \$100 million annually until 2050 from a 1/8 of a cent sales tax across the three counties. The rescue funds won't come a moment too soon.

"With this victory, Caltrain has a bright future as it will now be able to provide

"With new electric trains powered by clean energy, more frequent service, and stable and affordable fares, Caltrain will be able to realize its full potential."

Dave Pine  
Board Chair  
Caltrain



congestion relief throughout the corridor by serving tens of thousands of new riders with a vastly improved, modernized rail system," said Caltrain Board Chair Dave Pine.

The money will help the agency get back on track and pay for **CalMod**, a \$2 billion modernization designed to deal with trains that were packed before the coronavirus and an aging infrastructure. A key component of the program is the Caltrain Electrification project. More than \$700 million of the electrification funds came from the California High-Speed Rail Authority, which plans to share the electrified corridor with Caltrain between San Francisco, San Jose and eventually Gilroy.



1. Ridership on Caltrain dropped way off when the COVID-19 pandemic hit last year. Voters rescued the system by approving Measure RR last November. The sales tax measure will provide Caltrain with \$100 million annually until 2050.



2. Some of the funds from Measure RR will help pay for CalMod, a \$2 billion project that will electrify the Caltrain corridor and allow future high-speed rail trains to share tracks with Caltrain between San Francisco, San Jose and eventually Gilroy. (Photos courtesy of Caltrain)

CalMod calls for acquiring **electric double-decker trains** that will run faster and more often than the system's diesel trains. Last year, testing began on 7-car **trainsets manufactured by Stadler Rail** in Salt Lake City.

“With new electric trains powered by clean energy, more frequent service, and stable and affordable fares, Caltrain will be able to realize its full potential as the backbone of public transit on the Peninsula,” Pine said. “The people we serve have placed their faith in us with this vote, and with Measure RR we will continue to work to improve this vital service.”

In 2016, **Balfour Beatty** won the electrification contract worth almost \$700 million. Construction has continued during the pandemic and Balfour is hiring small businesses in an effort to meet Caltrain's goal of awarding 5.25% of its subcontracts to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs).

Meanwhile, Caltrain's long term plans call for helping California reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sharply increasing train capacity – enough to put the equivalent of 5.5 lanes of freeway traffic into Caltrain cars.

“Caltrain is very thankful to the voters for making a decision to support a cleaner, greener and less congested future,” said Caltrain's Executive Director Jim Hartnett. “This funding will sustain Caltrain through this time of crisis and will help evolve Caltrain to become the modernized mass transit system that the riders, residents, businesses and communities along this rail corridor deserve.”

Karen Massie



**1.** In 2016, Balfour Beatty won the Electrification Contract worth almost \$700 million. Construction has continued during the pandemic and means much-needed work for many small businesses.

**2.** Last year, testing began on the Caltrain's new trainsets at the Stadler Rail manufacturing plant in Salt Lake City. Tests include running the cars through thousands of gallons of water to make sure they are watertight.

**3.** When the new electric trains start running on Caltrain tracks, they'll go faster and will significantly decrease greenhouse gas emissions. (Photos courtesy of Caltrain)



LATEST VIDEOS: [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEDRAIL](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CAHIGHSPEDRAIL)



## TULE RIVER VIADUCT, TULARE COUNTY

Subcontractors are working on drilling more than 150 cast-in-drilled hole (CIDH) piles for the foundation at the Tule River Viaduct in Tulare County. Each pile ranges from 60 to 200 feet in length. These piles will form the bents for the substructure where girders lay across the top of the piers. The Tule River Viaduct will carry high-speed trains from the east to the west side of the BNSF freight line and across State Route 43.



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### SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

AS OF NOVEMBER 2020

**574** Certified Small Businesses  
working on the high-speed  
rail program statewide

**185** Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises  
**62** Certified Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA:

**201** Certified  
Small  
Businesses

CENTRAL VALLEY:

**177** Certified  
Small  
Businesses

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

**180** Certified  
Small  
Businesses

OUTSIDE OF CALIFORNIA:

**16** Certified  
Small  
Businesses