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New York City Department of Design and Construction Commissioner Wins ‘Building Innovation Award’ for Commitment to M/WBE Opportunities at 2016 Women Build America Conference

DDC Commissioner and Chief Diversity and Industry Relations Officer Represent New York City in National Construction Industry Roundtable Discussion and Conference

Long Island City, NY – Two representatives from the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) participated in the Women Build America Conference (WCOE) in Washington D.C. on Monday, April 4th. The conference was a national forum and discussion about promoting and advancing women in the construction industry.

DDC Commissioner, Feniosky Peña-Mora, accepted the Building Innovation Award, presented by the Women Construction Owners & Executives group, for the agency’s commitment to creating opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE).



(Left to right: Caryn Boise, President: Women Construction Owners & Executives USA, Dr. Feniosky Peña-Mora, Commissioner: NYC Department of Design and Construction, Husam Ahmad, Chairman and CEO: HAKS)

“Commissioner Peña-Mora shares my commitment to increase opportunities for M/WBEs and level the playing field for the city’s diverse small businesses. He deserves this award for helping create a stronger, more inclusive city and for diversifying the way the city does business. I look forward to his continued work at DDC,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“I’m proud to be the recipient of the Building Innovation Award,” said **DDC Commissioner Dr. Feniosky Peña-Mora**. “DDC is committed to providing opportunities for women to contribute to the built environment through our M/WBE initiative and our STEAM education programs that teach young women about architecture, engineering and construction. A more inclusive environment can lead to innovation and progress.”

DDC’s Chief Diversity and Industry Relations Officer, Maggie Austin, spoke as a distinguished panelist about opportunities for women in the construction field and changing current industrial culture to support more female professionals. The first panel was a roundtable discussion about how to transform the national construction industry across all markets. The second, entitled “Get the Work,” was a conversation about women business owners and construction executives increasing their competitive edge with the goal to secure new work in the billion dollar construction industry across the country.



(Left to right: Magalie Austin, Esq. Chief Diversity and Industry Relations Officer: NYC Department of Design and Construction and Lourdes Zapata, Executive Director, Division of Minority and Women’s Business Development: Empire State Development)

“The conference served as a forum for an important discussion about women in the construction industry, specifically about the current state of affairs and the direction women are heading professionally,” said **DDC’s Chief Diversity and Industry Relations Officer, Magalie Austin**. “It’s imperative that we change the current culture and get women more involved in the industry so that we can establish grounds for progress in economic equality and phase out bias and discrimination in these fields.”

In fiscal year 2015, New York City agencies (Mayoral and Non-Mayoral) awarded a total of \$1.6 billion in contracts to MWBEs, \$725 million of which were awards made by Mayoral agencies. Individually, DDC awarded over \$242 million in contracts representing over 33% of the Mayoral agency award total during the fiscal year. New York City has a goal to award over \$16 billion to MWBE’s over the next ten years; DDC will continue to play a significant role in helping the city meet that goal by ensuring procurement opportunities exist for everyone interested in doing business with the agency.

Women comprise only 34% of the total number of employed professionals with doctorates in the field of engineering, according to the National Science Foundation. Additionally, males are eight-times more likely to enter college with a plan to study engineering than their female peers according to the Higher Education Research Institute.

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ABOUT THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The Department of Design and Construction is the City’s primary capital construction project manager. In supporting Mayor de Blasio’s lenses of growth, sustainability, resiliency, equity and healthy living, DDC

provides communities with new or renovated public buildings such as such as firehouses, libraries, police precincts, new or upgraded roadways, sewers, water mains in all five boroughs. To manage this \$15 billion portfolio, DDC partners with other City agencies, architects and consultants, whose experience bring efficient, innovative, and environmentally-conscious design and construction strategies to city projects. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/DDC