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HSD makes gains in minority business enterprise participation

A report recently released by the Hazelwood School District indicates significant progress toward reaching goals set to seek and establish meaningful opportunities for minority and women-owned organizations pursuing business with the District.

“The Board of Education believes that District expenditures should reflect the diversity of our District population. We have developed goals to support the growth of minority and women-owned businesses. It is the right thing to do,” said Superintendent Dr. Chris Wright.

HSD set a goal of 25 percent minority business enterprise participation in construction projects. The most recent report indicates that 22 percent of the total expenditures on school district construction projects was spent on minority-owned businesses, up from approximately 12 percent in 2005. At six percent participation, the District exceeded its goal of five percent participation with women-owned businesses.

HSD is one of the first school districts in the state to voluntarily set inclusion goals for construction projects. In 2007, the District broadened its efforts to include overall purchasing, focusing on developing a diverse supplier base for all district purchases. The District hired ABNA Engineering and Hicks-Carter-Hicks, LLC to help the District develop a supplier diversity program.

Through April 2009, 27 percent of District expenditures for professional services were spent with minority-owned businesses, surpassing the district goal of 25 percent. In addition, more than nine percent of expenditures for supplies and equipment were spent with minority-owned businesses. The goal is 15 percent.

Although the District fell short of its goal of five percent spending with women-owned businesses (1.2 percent professional services and 2.5 percent supplies and equipment), HSD spending with WBE firms is up 60 percent from last year.

The Hazelwood School District has been recognized for its efforts. In December 2008, the St. Louis Minority Business Council selected the District as the “Institution of the Year” for the District’s success in working with minority- and women-owned businesses through its supplier diversity program.

The “Institution of the Year” award is "the most coveted and prestigious award presented to a corporation by the SLMBC."

“The district is committed to opening the doors for even more minority business development in the future,” said Gloria Carter-Hicks, of Hicks-Carter-Hicks, LLC, and chair of the SLMBC’s MBE Input Committee, as she presented the award.

In 2007, MOKAN named the District as *Institution of the Year* for the district’s efforts to encourage minority business participation. MOKAN’s primary mission is to assist in the overall development and growth of minority and women-owned construction business enterprises.

The District remains committed to improving relationships with minority and women-owned businesses by maintaining membership in the SLMBC, publishing bids and proposal opportunities in local, minority-owned publications and maintaining supplier diversity program information on the District Web site.

Hazelwood School District, the second largest district in St. Louis County, serves nearly 19,000 students. Communities in the district include Hazelwood, Black Jack, Spanish Lake, a large section of Florissant, portions of Bridgeton, Bellefontaine Neighbors and Ferguson, and several square miles of unincorporated St. Louis County. The mission of the Hazelwood School District is to launch learners on a quest for high standards, fairness and distinguished achievement.

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