

## **\$6 million in Performing Arts contracts to minority businesses exceeds goal**

Written by BNN

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ORLANDO-- More than \$6 million of the \$25 million already awarded for work on the Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center has gone to minority-owned firms, recently released city data indicates. That represents 26 percent of the contracts and subcontracts awarded so far for the ongoing project.

Women-owned businesses account for \$1.8 million, or 7 percent, of the contracts.

The Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center is part of the \$1.1 billion Community Venues Blueprint project, the largest public works project in Central Florida's history.

The Venues' public/private partnership requires major contractors to partner with local and minority-owned companies. Eighteen percent of the work must go to firms owned by minorities.

In addition to the subcontractors, one of the prime contractors is a woman-owned business, the consulting firm of Anderson and Associates.

"Minority- and women-owned businesses play an important part in our economy, but, for many reasons, they frequently have not been able to participate in large public works projects in the past," said Janeiro Coulter, the City's Blueprint Special Projects Manager.

"The high level of their participation is significant. Especially in these tough economic times, the city is proud to be making these opportunities available. It is our goal that these construction projects strengthen and grow our local businesses," added Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer.

Local minority subcontractors on the performing arts center are Monique Enterprises, Baker Barrios Architects, Brindley Pieters & Associates, SGM Engineering, WBQ Design and Engineering, Law and Associates and Cost Management.

Subcontracts also were awarded to the women-owned firms of Miriam B. Hull and Associates, Base Consultants, Quietly Making Noise, JCR Consulting and Carlsson Inc.

Design work has begun on the performing arts center, one of three state-of-the-art structures that make up the Blueprint Community Venues project. Construction is expected to begin in late winter 2009 and the building should be open to the public sometime in 2012.

Construction has already begun on the Orlando Events Center, which is expected to open in 2010. Renovations to the Citrus Bowl are projected to start in the winter of 2009 and are expected to be finished by 2011.

Eventually, according to the City of Orlando projections, the Venues project should generate \$10 billion in economic output and create thousands of jobs a year.

A big part of the project is providing opportunities for communities that often are overlooked: minority- and women-owned businesses and, on the construction payrolls, residents of inner-city neighborhoods who traditionally have had difficulty landing jobs.

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Prime contractors and their projects are:

> Anderson and Associates: \$651,000 for consulting services – \$117,000, or about 18 percent, of the subcontracts are going to a minority-owned firm and \$39,000, or 6 percent, to a woman-owned firm.

> HKS Architects: more than \$23.6 million for design work – more than \$6.2 million, or 26 percent, to minority-owned firms and more than \$1.1 million to women-owned firms.

> Donnell Consultants: more than \$1.2 million for cost consulting – \$220,000, or 18 percent, to a minority-owned firm and \$72,000, or 6 percent, to a woman-owned firm.