



**SECOND NATIONAL DBE CONFERENCE  
AND  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION'S AWARDS CEREMONY**

**Remarks of  
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Under Secretary for Policy  
U.S. Department Of Transportation**

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It is a pleasure and honor for me to be here today to represent the Secretary of Transportation, Norm Mineta, and to speak before this great audience of small business owners. I am told that the first day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Conference and the Secretary of Transportation's Awards Ceremony was very successful. Hopefully, by the end of this day, you will leave this event with not only a wealth of information but with lots of contact information that will enable you to build on the relationships that you have established over the past two days.

Secretary Mineta wants you to know that even though he was prevented from being with us today, his commitment to programs and services for small businesses has never been stronger. The Secretary has been available at most of the small and disadvantaged business enterprise Awards Ceremonies during his tenure at the Department of Transportation and he always takes enormous pleasure in presenting these awards in person.

Secretary Mineta is especially pleased to have Roger Minami as the new director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the Minority Resource Center as he continues the legacy of providing access to opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses at the Department.

Roger and his staff have worked long hours in preparing for this conference and we hope it will assist you in meeting the basic requirements for doing business with the DOT.

I would like to welcome the representatives who are here from our Modal Administrations and other members of the Department of Transportation's management team. Thank you for taking time out for what is certainly a conference of great importance to the minority business community.

As we come together today in this conference, we are mindful that many of our small businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama have suffered greatly, and are still suffering from the devastating blows from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. State and federal agencies are providing assistance to those in need. Under President Bush's leadership, the Gulf Coast will be restored to its proper place in America's economy.

The Department of Transportation is assisting the Gulf States in several ways. DOT is providing over \$18 million in Airport Improvement Funds as a first installment on federal support for repairing hurricane damage to airports in New Orleans, Gulfport-Biloxi and Bay St. Louis.

We are releasing a total of \$10 million in emergency relief funds to Louisiana and Mississippi as a first installment on federal support for highway repair work.

In addition, DOT is making \$47 million in federal emergency funds available to help restore transit service in New Orleans and to expand transit services in Baton Rouge.

It should also be noted that the Department is making more than \$2.6 million in short-term lending available to help small, disadvantaged businesses get back up and running in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Because of the hurricanes, this has been an extraordinary year. Even in less dramatic times, however, the federal government purchases billions of dollars of goods and services from the private sector each year.

Learning how to access these opportunities is important not only to you, but to those of us in the federal government as well.

That's why events like this 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Conference and the Secretary of Transportation's Awards Ceremony are so important.

Secretary Mineta says that it's good business to do business with minority and women-owned firms and he has instilled this philosophy throughout the Department of Transportation.

The programs and policies at DOT are aimed at opening opportunities to women- and minority-owned businesses, and are a big part of that fundamental commitment.

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and Minority Resource Center helps small business entrepreneurs identify and compete for contracts and other procurements.

Based on preliminary Fiscal Year 2005 data, DOT issued more than \$1.3 billion in direct contract awards this past year. More than \$626 million -- 47.9 percent -- of DOT's direct contract dollars went to small businesses and more than \$200 million -- 15.3 percent -- went to small disadvantaged businesses. Considering that the government-wide goals are 23 percent and 5 percent, respectively, these are significant achievements. In addition, women-owned businesses received 6.6 percent, Hub Zone businesses received 4.5 percent, and Service Disabled veterans received 7 percent of all contracting dollars.

Small businesses are at the heart of our expanding economy, just as they have always been.

And I am very proud of the Department's success in tapping the huge potential of your businesses to help us in our ongoing quest for safety, efficiency, and reliability in America's transportation network. We stand ready, willing, and able to open the doors of opportunity for these enterprises through several avenues.

Last year, Secretary Mineta directed OSDBU to step up its efforts to make the Minority Resource Center more responsive to the needs of DBE firms. He also asked OSDBU to develop a DBE executive education program that will provide valuable tools to help minority and female executives reach their full potential and grow their businesses.

Moving forward with that directive, an Agreement has been signed with The American Road & Transportation Builders Association -- ARTBA -- to develop and organize an Executive Development Academy that will offer educational programs designed specifically to assist DBE owners and executives in building their knowledge and understanding of how to run a successful transportation construction business working on public highway, transit and airport projects. We will show you a 5-minute video of the Executive Education Program immediately following my remarks.

We expect to have other initiatives off the ground and implemented this fiscal year.

For our part, we will continue to make sure that all of our DBE programs at the Department of Transportation -- in direct procurement, highways and transit, and airport concessions -- are an important gateway for new, vibrant businesses to enter the transportation arena. And they are a vital part of our effort to ensure that everyone has a chance to bring their best ideas to the table.

Speaking of the best, I'd like to turn now to one of the favorite duties of the Office of The Secretary of Transportation – and that is, recognizing good work.

It gives me enormous pleasure to help shine the spotlight this afternoon on procurement officials, minority business advocates, women-owned businesses, and the Department of Transportation's prime contractor of the year.

In addition, I am pleased to recognize some of the individuals who were instrumental in the start of the Minority Resource Center (formerly called the Minority Business Resource Center) over two decades ago. Without their dedication and foresight as staff, board members and executives of the Minority Business Resource Center we would not have a service today dedicated to minority, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Each of the honorees has set an exemplary standard of performance.

They were selected based on their past performance records, an exceptional commitment to customer service, strong business integrity, and a sheer determination to succeed.

On behalf of President Bush, Secretary Mineta, and everyone at the Department of Transportation, I want to congratulate this year's winners on a job well done.

And I want to thank you again for this invitation to spend some time with you this afternoon.

May God bless each and every one of you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

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