



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## National Organization of Minority Engineers Leadership Summit offers promise of construction-related contracts; *Pres. Spyropoulos explains MWRD's proactive diversity program on panel*



*Mariyana Spyropoulos, president of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (from left), Tom Powers, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water Management, Cheiko High, deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation, and Randall Blankenborn, secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, gave a 2015 outlook for their various agencies.*

Minority businesses received a promising outlook for construction-related contracts with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) at an inaugural conference.

The National Organization of Minority Engineers (NOME) Leadership Summit held at the Gleacher Center last month provided an outlet for minority engineering firms to learn about access, advocacy and participation in a fair procurement process. MWRD, which sponsored the event, also participated in two of the panels.

MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos participated in a panel entitled "2015 Outlook and Opportunity" with Randall Blankenborn, secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation; Cheiko High, deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation; and Tom Powers, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water Management.

"The District has a proactive diversity program to meet our active construction and consulting opportunities," said

President Spyropoulos. "The program is designed to ensure that minority, women and small businesses are given equal opportunity to participate in construction and professional service contracts. We want minority, women and small business to grow. We know that it is the success of these businesses that translates to the success of our country and our city."

President Spyropoulos and other agency leaders discussed a positive outlook for engineering work with a bountiful amount of projects to come. For construction-related contracts estimated at more than \$100,000 in value, the MWRD each year targets 20 percent of the contracts for minority firms, 10 percent for women and 10 percent for small business.

In 2014, MWRD awarded more than \$386 million in construction, consulting and job order contracts, including \$115 million to minority business enterprises (MBE), women business enterprises (WBE) and small business enterprises (SBE). *(continued)*



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"We cannot build all of this infrastructure on our own," said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, chairman of the MWRD Affirmative Action Committee. "We need to utilize contractors and consultants to accomplish our mission. The contributions provided by minority, small and women-owned businesses are tremendously credible and valued resources in the realm of the construction trades. We realize that the blending of unique talents and abilities provides additional value to the communities we serve. Our procurement process is designed to ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars, while also working to ensure that minority and women contractors are treated fairly and have an opportunity to perform work on MWRD contracts. We encourage minority firms to register to become a vendor. Our Procurement and Materials Management Department staff is available to assist firms and answer questions during all stages of the procurement process."

MWRD Compliance Officer Richard Martinez also participated in a panel entitled "Procurement Officers Evolving Rules and Future Opportunities with other officials from the city of Chicago, Illinois Tollway and Metra."

In addition to engineering contracts in design and construction management, the MWRD promotes diversity through its contracts with biosolid hauling and major tunneling and sewer projects. To register to become vendor with MWRD, firms are encouraged to visit [mwr.org](http://mwr.org) and click on "Become a New Vendor," under the Quick Links section on the home page.

Started in Chicago by local minority firms, NOME has a vision to expand to members across all 50 states. To learn more about NOME, visit [www.nomeonline.org](http://www.nomeonline.org).



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago President Mariyana Spyropoulos and Michael Sutton, president of the National Organization of Minority Engineers, discussed future opportunities for minority engineering firms at the inaugural NOME Leadership Summit. President Spyropoulos presented "Doing Business with the District." In 2014, more than \$75 million was paid to minority business enterprises and nearly \$40 million was paid to women business enterprises.



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Vice President Barbara McGowan promotes the MWRD's fair procurement policies and practices.

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