

**TESTIMONY OF ALICIA L. CASANOVA
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION
BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REGARDING HISPANIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN HIGH TECH AREAS**

OCTOBER 15, 1990

It is a pleasure for me to provide an overview of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) awards to minorities, with special emphasis on Hispanic achievements in the high tech area.

First, I would like to compliment the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on the excellent leadership that it is providing. I know that the Secretary appreciates your efforts as well. I also want you to know that we all share a common goal and purpose: to promote and advocate minority and women business enterprises consistent with principles of contracting fairness.

America has undergone major economic, social and political changes during the last 200 years, which have profoundly affected the way we live and think. Through all these changes ... one goal has remained the same... equal access to jobs, education and the political process and economic independence. Let me say, we all carry the true entrepreneurial spirit and have the capability in our ranks to compete on an equal basis.

We are in an economic struggle for opportunity in a growing American economy that creates jobs, not welfare, wealth, not poverty, and freedom, not dependency. This is a lesson America has taken too long to learn.

I can assure you, however, that it is a lesson the Bush Administration fully understands. President Bush's policies are setting the stage for the creation of new and expanded opportunities for the Nation's minority business community.

President Bush has stated: "I want to continue to expand opportunities for small business, including those owned by women and minorities... and join with me in establishing a level playing field for small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses."

At the Department of Transportation we are proud of the progress we have made in contract awards to Hispanic and other small and disadvantaged businesses. To generate opportunities, we are working hard to promote an economic environment that will help all minority businesses, as well as Hispanic businesses, to contribute more significantly to the U.S. economy.

For many Hispanic Americans, this has been a year of victories. Hispanics are a part of America's excellence, and they reflect the pinnacle of achievement in a land where opportunity abounds in all aspects of life. For example, Raydean Acevedo, President of Research Management Consultants, Inc. (RMCI), is a Denver based Hispanic 8(a) firm which received the largest 8(a) construction award made by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The award was for construction of a Terminal Radar Approach Control facility. Also, this firm was the recipient of the FAA's Outstanding Women-owned Business Award for 1990.

The FAA is RMCI's single largest customer with approximately \$17 million in contracts having been awarded over the past 18 months. The firm has several ongoing projects for the FAA including performing a variety of architectural and engineering services for the FAA Western-Pacific Region. RMCI, under another contract, is currently providing asbestos abatement, planning and analysis to the Western-Pacific Region. Also, RMCI is performing a requirements analysis to develop specifications for the Modeling and Simulation portion of the FAA's new National Airspace Modeling Facility (NAMFAC).

In a nutshell, Ms. Acevedo, President and CEO of RMCI, is an outstanding Hispanic entrepreneur, who has significantly benefited from the DOT awards! And as Hispanic Americans, we can all be proud of such accomplishments!

Another example of a Hispanic firm that's doing excellent work for the DOT is TAMSCO of Calverton, Maryland. TAMSCO President, N.R. "Nick" Innerbichler, has worked on Coast Guard projects for many years and has obtained an in-depth understanding of the overall mission and needs of the Coast Guard. Currently, the firm is working to install, integrate and maintain certain telecommunications equipment and software to process electronic payments by the U.S. Coast Guard's Finance Center in Chesapeake, Virginia and the Maintenance and Logistics Command (Pacific) located in Alameda, California. The approximate dollar value for this requirement is \$4 million.

The Coast Guard awarded the requirement to TAMSCO in an effort to conform to the reporting requirements and procedures in the Departmental Accounting and Financial Information System (DAFIS). The DAFIS system is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and resides on an IBM mainframe computer.

This effort also assists the Coast Guard in consolidating its independent District accounting operations and systems into a centralized accounting operation at the Coast Guard's Finance Center in Chesapeake, Virginia.

TAMSCO has an outstanding reputation in the Coast Guard community as well as other agencies within the Government workforce. This project is one base year plus four (4) option years.

Still another Hispanic firm providing excellent services to the DOT/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is SNI Training Services, Inc. of Phoenix, Arizona led by its President, Mr. Lupe Carbajal. The firm has provided exemplary service to the FHWA and is assisting in the establishment of the Pan American Institute of Highways. SNI is providing management services, conference and training programs to the FHWA.

The firm was nominated for the Small Business Administration's National Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year Award. In supporting the nomination, FHWA praised SNI as being a firm that does the best possible job for the customer and delivers outstanding performance.

SNI has the spirit of cooperation that should be generated throughout the Hispanic business community. This contractor definitely exemplifies an outstanding Hispanic American.

Richard J. Otero, President of RJO Enterprises, Inc., located in Lanham, Maryland, has undertaken telecommunications technical tasks for the DOT/Research and Special Program Administration (RSPA). This high tech requirement had a dollar value of \$3.6 million. This firm is currently performing a \$1.8 million contract on systems research, design development and implementation in support of National Airspace System. Also, this firm has done considerable projects for the Coast Guard.

International Productivity Services Corporation of Miami, Florida, is another excellent Hispanic firm working for the RSPA. Its President, Ignacio E. Fiterre received a Phase I contract for the amount of \$50,000 under the DOT/Small Business Innovative Research Program to develop an innovative concepts for a systems approach to security checkpoint optimization for use at Airports.

New Bedford Panoramex Corporation of Upland, California, is performing excellent work for the Coast Guard. Its President is Robert L. Ozuna. This firm is working on Coast Guard's power distribution pane kits and circuit breaker kits for the

power supply system on the 82 feet WPB Class vessels (Obsolete parts are being replaced). The replacing of these parts will enable the Coast Guard's sea and air rescue and law enforcement missions to be completed at top level performance.

Throughout the Department of Transportation there are many Hispanic firms providing excellent services; I have mentioned just a few. Nevertheless, Hispanic Americans have served, and are still serving, our country courageously, honorably and valiantly. We will continue to build on our accomplishments!

Through the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), we implemented a number of programs to assist small and disadvantaged business in performing work on transportation-related projects, including state and local federally-assisted programs. We currently have Bonding and Short-Term Lending programs which are administered through the OSDBU/Minority Business Resource Center. The Bonding Assistance Program enables minority, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises to obtain bid, payment and performance bonds for transportation-related projects. The Short Term Lending Program enables minority, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises to obtain short-term working capital at prime interest rates for transportation-related projects. On the other hand, the OSDBU/Direct Contracting/Financial Assistance (DC/FA) Division is the

initial point of contact for the private-sector when approaching the DOT for procurement opportunities and it provides many services to the minority business community. To name a few:

- o Monitors all DOT procurement activities that involve participation of minority, women, small and disadvantaged entrepreneurs.
- o Assists firms in their marketing of the DOT and its Operating Administrations, for example:
 - 1) Provides a forum for marketing the entire DOT at one time.
 - 2) Counsels firms on procedures for doing business with the DOT.
- o Works to solve some of the specific problems that keep minority business enterprises from realizing their full potential, such as:
 - 1) Assists firms in understanding new legislation and its impact on minority business.
 - 2) Provides guidance on working with the DOT Operating Administrations.
- o Collects and evaluates the DOT Advance Procurement Plans.

- o Negotiates the DOT Procurement Goals with the SBA.

and many, many other services are available to disadvantaged businesses seeking to do business with the DOT.

It is my belief that we can accomplish much when well-meaning people open their minds and work together. We seek to sharpen the tools by which millions of underprivileged Americans can benefit from the economic opportunity before us. Our mission is to bring them into the mainstream of society, socially, economically and politically. Our mission is broad and comprehensive. It involves all levels of government and private industry. It is a mission that we believe is good for Hispanics and minority businesses in general, as well as good for the private sector, and good for the Nation.

Many of you in the Hispanic Caucus have become key players in this mission. Others have come to learn how to become a part of this growing trend in the Nation. Yet, we must continue to take advantage of forums such as this, to share information, to encourage the participation of other Hispanics, and to set plans of action for the future.

We are part of a growing revolution in America. It is an economic revolution which stands to benefit this Nation and all of its people. Hispanic business is, and always will be, good business for America. I'm extremely proud to be a Hispanic American and part of the development of strong, healthy minority businesses.

America is a wonderful country with many needs. We are all striving to provide greater employment opportunities and participation in the economic and political system of this country for Hispanics, as well as all minorities.

Each of you should feel proud to be a Hispanic American and proud to be part of this great mission to advance minority business. For it is the spirit of entrepreneurship that continues to make our country great. I encourage each of you to continue in that spirit.

Thank you.