

# School Construction Industry Connection

## Rebuilding Orleans Parish Schools

Schools Rebuilding DBE Newsletter • February 2020



Booker T. Washington High School

## School Rebuilding 15 Years Post-Katrina

As we approach the 15 year anniversary of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Recovery School District (RSD) is pleased to report that the rebuilding of the New Orleans Public Schools is nearing a completion of the Master Plan developed following the storm. Of the seventy-nine (79) schools designated to be rebuilt new, renovated or refurbished, seventy-three (73) projects have been completed.



Booker T. Washington High School ribbon cutting celebration

- **New/Major Renovations—47**
  - 42 completed
  - 2 under construction
  - 3 in procurement—design
- **Refurbishments—32**
  - 31 completed
  - 1 in procurement—design

The completion of the new Booker T. Washington High School marked a major accomplishment in 2019 as the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony took place this past October. While work on the historic Booker T. Washington Auditorium continues, the BTW completion means that 33,950 quality seats have been created for the students of New Orleans Public Schools since the post-Katrina rebuilding effort started. All of the new and renovated structures have been built to ADA standards, with light and air quality vastly improved and energy efficiency greatly enhanced.

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Booker T. Washington High School ribbon cutting

Additionally, approximately 3.5 million square feet of storm damaged buildings have been demolished. Nine (9) buildings have been “moth-balled” to US Department of Interior standards and twenty-eight (28) vacant buildings and unused parcels have been sold generating twenty-five million dollars (\$25 million) for the Master Plan effort.

These results have been accomplished with the infusion of \$1.8 Billion in funding from FEMA, \$120 Million in CDBG funding, and \$80 million in Tax Credits. The majority of the new construction has been accomplished by New Orleans based firms, including 205 Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE’s) realizing nearly \$190 million dollars for their efforts.

In 2020, RSD will complete work on the new Karr High School campus on the Westbank and will break ground on a new building

at the Cohen High School location in uptown, a Career Technical Education High School at the site of the old McDonogh 35 and Behrman Elementary in Algiers. NOLA Public Schools will also complete work on the new New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics School located in downtown New Orleans.

Annie Cambria, the Chief Operating Officer of Educational Facilities Development at RSD said, “The work on rebuilding great schools for the children of New Orleans has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my life. I want to thank our partners at NOLA Public Schools, the funders, the school administrators, architecture/engineering firms, the construction companies and their workers and the project management team that has seen this project through from 2008. The citizens of New Orleans should be proud!”

## —The BuildNOLA Mobilization Fund—

**T**he BuildNOLA Mobilization Fund program is designed to connect socially and economically disadvantaged businesses (DBE firms) with access to the capital needed to participate in the abundance of economic opportunity in public and private sector contracting in New Orleans.

The fund will provide both mobilization capital for start-up costs including insurance, bonding, equipment and initial labor costs, and/or contract lines of credit to ensure timely payments to suppliers and compliance with David Bacon wage requirements for weekly payment to employees. The mobilization fund is intended to serve DBE firms who are generally under-served by the mainstream capital marketplace. As such, the program design includes risk-reduction strategies including:

- A dual payee system with invoices payable to the DBE firm
- A third-party funds administration program for firms that need back office support for payment of supplier invoices and weekly payroll
- A construction project manager that will provide pre-loan contract analysis, pre-loan pricing and project budget review, prime contractor interface and post-loan contractor technical assistance. Also, the construction project manager will act as a liaison between the contractor, the borrower and NewCorp Inc.

**For the DBE firms, the program design includes access to technical assistance to build the capacity of the business owner to manage government contracts.**

### Eligibility Requirements

The mobilization fund will be available to all DBE firms that meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Certification as a DBE firm
- Eligible to do business in the City of New Orleans
- Tax clearance with the City of New Orleans and a valid occupational license

### Underwriting Criteria

- No chapter 7 bankruptcy within a 12 month period
- No default on a loan to the participating lending institution(s)

- Minimum credit score of 500
- Qualification is specific to a bid or construction project

### Loan Terms

- Loan amount: \$50,000 to \$250,000.00
- Loan type: interim construction loan/line of credit or bond guarantees
- Use of funds: finance direct operating costs for construction/professional services contracts
- Loan term: equal to contract term
- Loan fees: 1% of loan amount

For more info. contact Wayne Encalarde, Jr. • [wencalarde@nolaba.org](mailto:wencalarde@nolaba.org)



*Louis Livers*

Louis Livers has grown his company by working from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, and Lafayette opening doors of opportunities largely aided by the Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) goals set by the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD).

## Livers Construction Growth Through Partnership

Louis Livers never intended to have a career in construction. His childhood dream was to become one of the “Masters of the Universe” - a financial wizard on Wall Street. His journey began as a student at St. Augustine High School. After finishing St. Augustine, Louis earned a coveted finance degree at Xavier University of Louisiana and years later a Master’s degree from New York University Real Estate Institute.

During his junior year in high school, he began working as a Grounds Keeper and Maintenance Assistant at St. David’s Catholic Church and School in the Lower Ninth Ward. The St. David’s complex was located on two-city blocks that included six very old distinct buildings. Every Christmas and Summer break, Livers’ job was to strip and wax the floors in the complex. During the first four summers, a renovation project was scheduled with one of the parishioners who happened to be a contractor. During the renovation projects, Livers became a carpenter’s apprentice and was trained on the job.

By the age of twenty, Livers was responsible for managing construction projects for both the school and church. When he graduated from Xavier in 1990, no employment opportunities existed in the world of finance because America was in the midst of the Savings and Loan Financial Crisis. His seven years of exposure and experience at St. David’s was the impetus for his career in construction that ultimately led to the formation of Livers Construction.

Livers Construction was founded at a time when the Office of Housing and Urban Affairs of the City of New Orleans was in dire need of residential rehabilitation contractors. Livers points out, “There were low barriers to entry at that time. All that was required were references, general liability and workers compensation insurance.”

After establishing himself in the residential market, Livers had the good fortune to meet a landscape architect who knew his work and recommended him to a colleague at Xavier, his college alma mater. He got his first commercial job at Xavier, which required him to build a wall using metal studs. Having never worked with metal studs, Livers almost refused the job. If it were not for a skilled employee of his, he might have passed on this opportunity. That fifteen-hundred-dollar (\$1,500.00) project began his commercial construction career.

Livers describes Xavier University as a “Godsend—It was my alma mater, so I worked tirelessly on whatever projects they gave me, and I continue to do so nearly 30 years later. During my initial years, I was not focused on profitability. I only cared about doing a great job and earning a stellar reputation. Living with my parents at that stage of the business afforded me the opportunity to focus on building my resume on commercial projects.” Livers said.

While establishing his company at Xavier, the Vice President and General Counsel of Tulane University, Ron Mason, decided that Tulane needed to be more inclusive in its hiring of contractors. He instructed his facilities director to contact his counterpart at Xavier and Livers was recommended to Tulane University. Livers remains a Tulane vendor today, embodying a twenty-year relationship.

Livers says that he does not want to create the perception that everything has been a “crystal staircase”. He said, “I have faced all sorts of roadblocks and challenges. When I expanded the commercial division, the first big project on which I was the low bidder was challenged by my competitors. To this day I am astounded by their rationale. They went to the University President and told him that I was too young and inexperienced for a project of that size. It was a good thing for me that I had earned a solid reputation by that time and the facilities director supported me in that endeavor. To date, Xavier University is my longest standing client,” Livers said.

As his reputation grew, it allowed him to build alliances throughout the Gulf-South with some of the region’s largest contractors. He has grown his company by working from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, and Lafayette opening doors of opportunities largely aided by the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals set by the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD). Livers has provided construction services to numerous school rebuilding projects including Booker T. Washington High School, John McDonogh, and Edna Karr.

He was the lead contractor on the new Liberty Bank Gentilly Branch building and the SUNO Small Business Center.

Livers said, “Out of the tragedy that was Katrina, RSD was charged with the task of rebuilding New Orleans public schools.

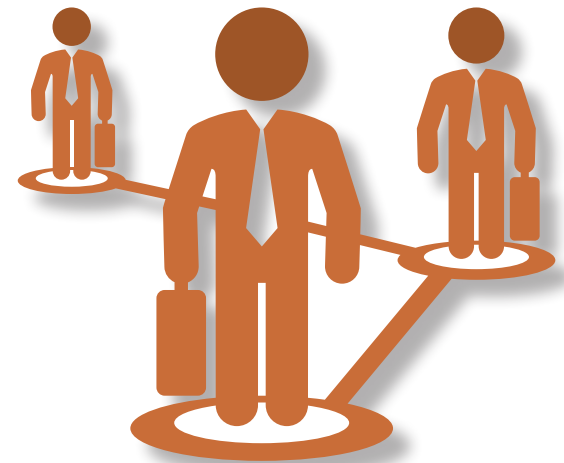
RSD hired JACOBS/CSRS as Program Managers and during his term as RSD Superintendent, Patrick Dobard set DBE hiring goals. For the first time there existed a State of Louisiana entity dedicated to ensuring access to all qualified firms. The RSD mandated significant DBE participation and put enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure that goals became reality. No longer were ‘good faith’ efforts enough!” He added, “Most importantly the RSD decision to use alternative delivery methods, such as CMAR and Design – Build procurement, made DBE participation attractive to large general contractors by bestowing a competitive advantage to the firms who were committed to inclusion.”

“The School Rebuilding Program as administered by the RSD has brought a level of inclusion and diversity to construction heretofore unseen in the New Orleans area,” Livers concludes.

“The RSD and its program put in place enforcement mechanisms to ensure that goals became reality. No longer were ‘good faith’ efforts enough!”

# Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Monthly Summary

## Making the Connection



### Recovery School District

**New & Renovations:**

DBE Contractors secured subcontracts on 26 projects as of November 30, 2019. The DBE subcontracts value is \$82,795,295 of the \$364,282,325 total of awarded contracts.

**Stabilization/Demolition/Mothballing:**

DBE Contractors secured subcontracts on 64 projects as of November 30, 2019. The DBE subcontracts value is \$24,633,553 of the \$77,987,796 total of awarded contracts.

**Design-Build New:**

DBE Contractors secured subcontracts on 3 projects as of November 30, 2019. The DBE subcontracts value is \$34,542,724 of the \$109,137,557 total of awarded contracts.

**CMAR New:**

DBE Contractors secured subcontracts on 3 projects as of November 30, 2019. The DBE subcontracts value is \$47,092,935 of the \$134,245,850 total of awarded contracts.

**Total Amount of DBE Contracts Awarded to Date: \$189,064,487**

*DBE provisions were included in projects bid after June 30, 2019*

# Contractor's Resource Center



The Urban League of Louisiana in collaboration with Jacobs/CSRS Program Management, has served as the technical consulting partner for the School Rebuilding Program for the Recovery School District. Since 2013, the Urban League's Contractor's Resource Center has provided back office and capacity-building training for DBE, minority, and women-owned contractors who participate in the School Rebuilding Program, as well as, other public and private contracting opportunities across Southeast Louisiana.



From inception through October 2019, the program has hosted 140 trainings and events on contractor-specific topics for a total of 518 hours delivered. These trainings have served 1536 attendees, 72% of which were minority-owned firms, and 49% women-owned firms. Training topics include:

- Construction Bid Prep
- Work-In-Progress Accounting
- QuickBooks and Costing for Contractors
- G702/03 Pay Apps, Certified Payroll, and Other Back-Office Applications
- Introduction to PlanSwift Basic Estimating/Intermediate PlanSwift Estimating
- Introduction to UDA ConstructionSuite Scheduling/Intermediate UDA ConstructionSuite Scheduling
- Integrating QuickBooks with UDA ConstructionSuite
- Crafting an Effective Capability Statement
- OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 Safety Training

The support services provided by the Urban League of Louisiana not only include training, but also one-on-one business counseling, mentoring, and access to resources like funding and bonding assistance programs.

Beyond the School Rebuilding Program, the Urban League will continue its work to provide contractor-specific trainings and special events to support historically under-served communities across the state of Louisiana. ULLA has partnered with NewCorp, Inc. to provide technical assistance to its clients who participate in the Build Nola Mobilization Fund. In addition, ULLA hosts annual events and signature programs that provide networking and professional development opportunities to its clients.

For example, ULLA is the statewide host for the **Green Professional Building Skills Training and Certificate Program**. GPRO is a comprehensive international training and certificate program developed by Urban Green Council, the U.S. Green Building Council's New York City affiliate. GPRO's trade-specific modules are designed for contractors and building professionals who seek to integrate green practices into the core knowledge of their trade.

Lastly, our newest activation is the **Scale Up! Louisiana** initiative. This nine-module entrepreneurship education initiative teaches early stage businesses how to create a scalable, profitable, and sustainable business model.

With a statewide reach and a comprehensive catalog of trainings and special events, as well as counseling and other capacity-building services, the Urban League of Louisiana is proud to serve DBE, minority, and women-owned contracting firms across the state of Louisiana.

For the most up-to-date information on training programs and special events, please visit [www.urbanleaguela.org/cei](http://www.urbanleaguela.org/cei) or at [www.ullacei.eventbrite.com](http://www.ullacei.eventbrite.com).

## UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS

Wednesday, Mar. 11	*Contractor's Mastery Series – Session I: UDA Construction Suite Scheduling Software	ULLA 4640 S. Carrollton Ave., Ste. 250, New Orleans
Wednesday, Mar. 25	*Contractor's Mastery Series – Session II: PlanSwift Estimating Software	ULLA 4640 S. Carrollton Ave., Ste. 250, New Orleans
Wednesday, Apr. 1	*Contractor's Mastery Series – Session III: Construction Bid Prep	ULLA 4640 S. Carrollton Ave., Ste. 250, New Orleans
Wednesday, Apr. 8	*Contractor's Mastery Series – Session IV: QuickBooks and Costing	ULLA 4640 S. Carrollton Ave., Ste. 250, New Orleans
Wednesday, June 3 Thursday, June 4	Green Professional Building Skills Training – Operations and Maintenance Essentials (2-Day Course)	AARP Community Resource Center 3502 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans
Monday, June 8	G702/03 Pay Apps and Certified Payroll	ULLA 4640 S. Carrollton Ave., Ste. 250, New Orleans

\*All trainings denoted with an asterisk require that the attendee be certified through the Louisiana Economic Development Small and Emerging Business Development Program. There is no cost to apply and most small businesses meet the eligibility requirements. For more information and to apply for certification, please visit [www.opportunitylouisiana.com/sebd](http://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/sebd).



Cohen High School

## Publisher's Corner

This newsletter, "School Construction Industry Connection", is a publication created by the School Rebuilding Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Team. The DBE Team meets weekly to review, plan and advocate for DBE and local involvement in rebuilding the public schools of New Orleans.

The newsletter is intended to provide a transparent look at the level of local and DBE involvement in school rebuilding. We will provide updates on DBE involvement in each construction project, information on upcoming construction bids, contact information on resource providers, a feature story on a successful DBE contractor, and commentary on policy initiatives to enhance DBE participation.

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