



# ABCA NEWSPPOINTS

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## TxDOT NETWORKING EXPO EVENT



Lt. General Webber,  
USMC (Ret)  
Executive Director

On July 8, 2015, the Austin Area Black Contractors Association (ABCA) participated as an exhibitor at TxDOT's Networking Expo Event held at the Bullock Museum. The event was targeted to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) and Small Business Enterprises (SBE) interested in learning more about doing business with general contractors performing TxDOT' projects; state agencies services; and services and assistance offered by trade associations such as the ABCA, United Hispanic Contractors de Austin and the National Association of Minority Contractors. Opportunities were available for attendees to network with prime contractors such as Zachary Construction; Balfour Beatty Construction; Texas Sterling Construction; Spawglass Construction; Austin Bridge and Road; Accenture; University of Texas System; University of Texas Austin-PMCS; Texas State University; Travis County; City of Austin-Small and Minority Business Resources. Additionally, workshops were offered on "doing business with state agencies" specifically, TxDOT; "getting DBE certified"; "managing DBE compliance" and information on upcoming IT projects. The ABCA was represented by Carol Hadnot, Business Resource Consultants; Cloteal Davis Haynes, Haynes•Eaglin•Waters, LLC; Heath Williamson, Earth Co Landscaping Company, LLC; Joann Sepeda and Ronda Houston both with Zlynx Services, Inc. and Relief Enterprises, Inc. According to TxDOT's spokesperson, over 300 businesses and exhibitors attended this event.

# MORE PHOTOS




For More Information about TxDOT Procurement and Contracting Opportunities, Contact TxDOT's Office of Civil Rights at 512-486-5501



Ronda Houston, Zlynx Services, Inc.; Heath Williamson, Earth Co Landscaping Company, LLC.; Carol S. Hadnot, Business Resource Consultants; and Cloteal Davis Haynes, Haynes • Eaglin • Waters, LLC.



Carol S. Hadnot, Business Resource Consultants and ABCA



Ronda Houston and Joanne Sepeda, Zlynx Services, Inc.; Juan Oyervides, Hispanic Contractors Association de Austin; and Carol S. Hadnot, Business Resource Consultants and ABCA



Juan Oyervides, Hispanic Contractors Association de Austin; Carol S. Hadnot, Business Resource Consultants and ABCA; and Stephen Delgado, Texas Engineering Solutions, LLC.

# CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

## Brick-Laying Robot Helps Alleviate The Dearth of Masons



A robot that lays bricks is now out of beta testing and at work alongside masons and laborers at a school-building jobsite in Ft. Collins, Colo. The Semi-Autonomous Mason, more commonly known as SAM, is already booked for two

additional jobs. Masons working with SAM say the robot may help alleviate workforce shortages foreseen in future generations in masonry trades. "He does a pretty good job, is pretty efficient, and I don't mind working with him," says John Munt, a mason employed by Ft. Collins-based Soderberg Masonry. "He's putting [bricks] in the wall for us and we get them jointed right behind." Munt lives in Arizona but was called out to Colorado where there is a shortage of masons. Other team members came from California.

SAM finished its first wall and is moving onto the second now, says Zachary Podkaminer, operations manager for Construction Robots, Victor, N.Y. "We put 900 bricks in the wall yesterday, with one mason and one tender," he says.

SAM is mounted on a tracked Hydro Mobile mast-climbing platform that extends the deck by 18 in. Workers move the platform where SAM needs to work. The robot is powered by propane and works off a 3D map file that tells it where to stop and start and enables it to avoid window sections.

"You need to set up two story poles, [to the] left and right of where Sam will build," says Podkaminer. "The right story pole has a laser that guides SAM so it can correct for any movement of the Hydro Mobile platform and keep laying flush bricks.

Unlike a masonry worker, who applies mortar to the wall before laying a brick, SAM applies mortar to a brick before laying it."

But cautions Podkaminer, "To minimize downtime you've got to think ahead when using this. Once workers get in the groove and walk through a few courses beside SAM, they understand the process. Knowing how the robot works helps smooth the work process. "Make sure when the wall tie is ready to go, you put it in immediately so SAM can continue working."

The manager adds that SAM has become a jobsite attraction. "Every day you see construction workers or people outside the site taking out their iPhones to take photos," says Podkaminer. "They're all just amazed."

In addition, SAM's coworkers credit their robotic colleague with lightening their workload. "A lot of the younger guys aren't coming into the trades anymore, so the robot can take the place of some of those guys," says Munt.

Source: [By Luke Abaffy, 06/23/2015](#) **ENR.com**  
Engineering News-Record

## PA CONSTRUCTION OWNERS INDICTED FOR DEFRAUDING U.S. DOT

•The owners of two Kutztown, PA, construction companies were indicted in federal court this week for allegedly defrauding the U.S. Department of Transportation of \$18.7 million.

•The indictments alleged the owners of Weber Steel Service set up a sham corporation that they used to win federally funded highway construction projects through the DOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. Because Weber Steel Service is not minority- or woman-owned, it did not qualify for the contracts.

•According to the indictment, the owners enlisted a female partner to become the owner of the shell company, Karen Construction, which secured the contracts, used Weber Steel resources for the work, and shared the profits with that firm's owners. She was indicted on similar charges.

*Each of the three defendants faces up to five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000. Weber Steel Services is also named in the indictment, and could be fined \$500,000 and slapped with five years of probation. Federal prosecutors said the scheme lasted from around April 1995 through November 2011 and involved 224 federally funded projects.*

The federal DBE program mandates that at least 10% of federal funding for highway construction be allotted to small businesses that are "economically and socially disadvantaged."

Source: [Sharon O'Malley | June 19, 2015](#) **ID Construction DRIVE**



**The Austin Area Black Contractors Association is reaching out to all African American Construction Contractors located in Travis, Hays, Williamson, Bastrop and Caldwell Counties to get MBE/WBE/DBE Certified with the City of Austin.**

Additionally, check-out ABCA's award winning website at [www.abcatx.com](http://www.abcatx.com).

View calendar of events • training curriculums • tool box tips guide • newspoint newsletters • and summary of upcoming construction opportunities advertised weekly in the on-line Bid Briefs!

**For More Information, Call 512-467-6894**

**ARTICLE OF INTEREST**

*Misty Copeland makes history as American Ballet Theatre's first black principal ballerina*

Misty Copeland, who has been outspoken about race in the world of dance, has become the first black principal ballerina at the American Ballet Theatre, a first in the top ballet company's 75-year history. The company's artistic director Kevin McKenzie announced Tuesday that Copeland is expected to start her new role, along with the three other selected principal dancers, in August, the New York Times reported. The 32-year-old ballerina, who spent the past eight years as a soloist, has worked her way through the ABT ranks for 14 years, eventually landing several plum roles, including the female lead in Igor Stravinsky's "Firebird" in 2012.

In her memoir, "Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina," Copeland described her inauspicious beginnings, growing up in a low-income household and taking free ballet classes at the Boys & Girls Club at age 13, a late start for aspiring ballerinas. Despite the odds, ABT accepted Copeland into the company's main Corps de Ballet four years later. "I traced the marley floor with my pointe shoes, and imagine myself on the stage, not as a member of the corps, but as a principal dancer,"

Copeland wrote in her memoir, published last year. "It felt right. It felt like a promise. Some day, somehow, it was going to happen for me." Copeland's promotion also advances a black dancer, who has openly discussed the lack of African-American representation within traditional dance companies. Copeland told the NewsHour in August that her desire to be principal dancer was a long, arduous journey. "The ballet world, I don't think is an art form that is quick to change or to adjust or evolve," she said, "ABT and most classical companies are about kind of following this slow and steady process of proving yourself and moving up through the ranks." That perseverance allowed Copeland to make history as ABT's first black female soloist in 20 years. Copeland also inspired ABT to launch Project Plié, a national initiative to aims to diversify ballet's traditionally white ranks.

Source: Joshua Barajas, The Rundown, PBS Newshour

**Did you know, Serena Slammed 6th Wimbledon?**



**33-year-old Serena Williams won her Sixth Wimbledon on Saturday and 21st Grand Slam Overall**

With a victory at next month's U.S. Open, she'd become the third woman in history to win the calendar Slam and also tie Steffi Graf for the most Grand Slam titles of all time.

Source: Time Magazine



**Get certified with the City of Austin as a MBE, WBE or DBE, Call the — Small & Minority Business Resources Dept (SMBR) Certification Division at 512-974-7645**

**Check-out ABCA's website:**

[www.abcatx.com](http://www.abcatx.com)

View the *Bid Briefs' link* for a current listing of *Construction Procurement Opportunities!*



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