

# The Transporter



OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

## ODOT DBE Conference 2016 "Building the Road to Your Future"

## March 2016



On February 26, 2016, the Civil Rights Division hosted the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Conference at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) in Norman, Oklahoma. This year our opening speaker, Basharat Siddiqi, newly appointed Oklahoma Division Administrator of the FHWA, spoke on ways the State of Oklahoma and DBE firms will benefit from the "FAST Act 2015" Program. This program gives money to states to build suitable roads and highways in addition to money allotted within the state's budget.

The first keynote speaker, Paul Johnson, discussed his role as a DBE and encouraged DBE firms to seek certification in more than one state. Johnson expressed that this will allow firms to become more proactive toward opportunities available in surrounding states and nationwide. Mr. Johnson's information was very relevant as we, your ODOT partners, roll out the B2Gnow program; making the process seamless for those seeking certification.

The second keynote speaker, Mr. Jeremy Tubb, discussed topics related to Title VII in which he offered tips for evaluating cases of harassment and provided best practices for businesses to collect and keep needed information in case of future litigation.

Over 200 attendees had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions that addressed Equal Employment Opportunity, DBE Goal Methodology/Certification, DBE Supportive Services/DBE On-line, Disability Etiquette, Environmental Impacts, and Construction and an Consultant panels. The Civil Rights team enjoyed speaking one on one with many participants and we are already looking forward to planning for next year.



### DBE Needs Assessment

**DBEs: Your feedback is important to us!**

Complete our Needs Assessment Survey on the Civil Rights Webpage under Related Topics. Please complete and email back to your Supportive Services Coordinator at [ltompson@odot.org](mailto:ltompson@odot.org)

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## New Employee: DBE Reviewer



Amber Mihm,  
DBE Reviewer

The new DBE Reviewer is Mrs. Amber Mihm. Amber has worked for the State of Oklahoma for over seven years in the Office of Management & Enterprise Services' (OMES) Construction and Properties and Central Purchasing. While at OMES, she worked with vendors, held pre-bids, bid openings, worked on scope of work, solicitations, contracts, and purchasing. Mrs. Mihm was on and over the P.E.R.C. (Promoting Public Employee Recognition Committee) from 2009 - 2014. Prior to working for the State, Mrs. Mihm was an auto adjustor for one of the top insurance companies in the U.S. Mrs. Mihm attended Rose State College and Mid-America

Christian University. She is currently in the Certified Public Managers Program. Amber loves spending time with her son who is in the U.S. Marines. She also enjoys traveling with her husband, spending time with family and volunteering.

## New Employee: DBE Supportive Services Coordinator



La Tashia Thompson,  
DBE Supportive  
Services Coordinator

The new DBE Supportive Services Coordinator is Ms. La Tashia Thompson. She has come to our Division from Langston University where she was a Property Manager for 12 years with the Habitat Company. She worked with various vendors and contractors to complete needed tasks within University

housing facilities. Ms. Thompson has a B.A. in Psychology, a Masters in Urban Education from Langston University and a Masters in Human Relations from University of Oklahoma. Ms. Thompson is also a Licensed Professional Counselor with the State of Oklahoma. Ms. Thompson has extensive knowledge working with budget and programming and comes to our Division eager to build and develop relationships with DBE firms.

## B2Gnow: Civil Rights Certification and Compliance System



B2Gnow is a software program that has been adopted by The Civil Rights Division used to expedite DBE application and certification renewal, promote communication with certified firms and prime contractors and ease prompt payment requirements.

### How can you get prepared for this program launch?

1. Provide your DBE reviewer with all needed and updated information about your company.
2. Develop an email account. Contact your DBE Supportive Services Coordinator for assistance, if needed.
3. Look for upcoming training and launch dates for B2Gnow coming soon.

# ODOT Civil Rights Division

## The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or "FAST Act"

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act." It is the first law enacted in over ten years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, meaning States and local governments can move forward with critical transportation projects, like new highways and transit lines, with the confidence that they will have a Federal partner

over the long term. Secretary Foxx and his team at U.S. DOT have worked tirelessly to advocate for a long term bill, underscoring the needed sense of urgency to the American people. (U.S. DOT)

**How does this affect the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program?** FAST Act reauthorizes the current provisions of the program and adjusts the annual gross receipts limit for eligible

DBE firms to \$23.98 million. The adjustment is consistent with the recent inflation-based adjustments and maintains the requirement for the future annual adjustments as well. U.S. DOT is also instructed to track complaints on prompt payment to DBE firms and make this information available publicly. For more on this topic visit:

[www.transportation.gov/fastact](http://www.transportation.gov/fastact)



## The Impacts Title VII Has on DBE Firms

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other related laws were enacted to prohibit discrimination and harassment due to a person's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, retaliation or genetic information. This law applies to an employer who has 15 or more employees for each working day in each of 20 or more calendar weeks in the

current or preceding calendar year. **Therefore, if you are a DBE firm with more than 15 employees, become aware of the laws within Title VII and how the laws can impact your business.**

It is unlawful to base any employment decisions on the grounds covered by the Civil Rights laws. The Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC) is the Federal entity created to interpret Civil Rights laws and investigate Federal employers. The EEOC reports to Congress and the President concerning all actions taken. Any questions regarding Civil Rights laws can be addressed to the EEOC.



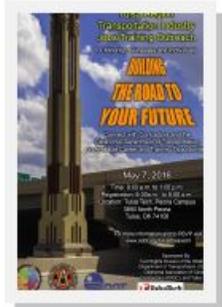
## Tulsa Transportation Industry Jobs/Training Outreach: May 7, 2016

The ODOT Civil Rights Division is hosting a job training/outreach for the Tulsa and surrounding communities. The 2016 DBE Outreach, "Building the Road to Your Future," will be held on **Saturday, May 7, 2016**, at the Tulsa Tech, Peoria Campus in Tulsa, OK.

This free event provides insight to individuals in the community pursuing a career in construction. This event is co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Association of General Contractors and Tulsa Tech.

Please join us for information sharing and networking opportunities in your field.

For more information and to register online, please visit: [www.odot.org/dbeevent](http://www.odot.org/dbeevent)



# “A Partner In Your Success”

## OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
Civil Rights Division  
Room 1-C1  
200 N.E.21 St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
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### Our Mission

*To develop and administer civil rights programs in an equitable and innovative manner, while increasing awareness of equal opportunity for all stakeholders.*



### 2016 Upcoming Events

See all of our events and  
more information at  
[www.odot.org/dbeevent](http://www.odot.org/dbeevent)

#### Transportation and Construction Job Fair

Location: Oklahoma Expo Hall  
Oklahoma State Fairgrounds  
March 24, 2016, 9:00 am—2:00 pm

#### DBE Supportive Services On-Boarding

Location: Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation  
Civil Rights Room 1-C1  
March 29, 2016, 1:30 pm

#### OSHA 30 Training for DBE Firms

Location : Francis Tuttle, Rockwell Campus  
April 11-14, 2016, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

#### Transportation Assistance Program (TAP)

Location: Francis Tuttle, Rockwell Campus  
May 2-6, 2016, 8:00 am— 5:00 pm

#### Tulsa Transportation Jobs/Training Outreach

Location: Tulsa Tech, Peoria Campus in Tulsa, OK  
May 7, 2016, 8:00am - 1:00pm

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DBE –Supportive Services:	La Tashia Thompson	405-521-6440
Acting ADA/504/508 Coordinator:	Elizabeth Blais	405-522-3626
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*The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) ensures that no person or groups of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, retaliation or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by ODOT, its recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors.*