



N E W S R E L E A S E
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PORT TOPS SMALL BUSINESS OUTREACH GOAL Smaller Firms Awarded More than 60 percent of Contracts

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The Port of Long Beach far exceeded its goal for increasing small business participation in Port contracting, awarding more than 60 percent or \$17 million in construction and planning jobs to smaller businesses during the fiscal year ending September 30.

Under a Small Business Enterprise/Very Small Business Enterprise Program launched last fall, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners set a goal of 20 percent – twice the percentage of the previous year -- for Port construction and planning contracts to go to smaller businesses

Given the first year success, the Board of Harbor Commissioners' Development Committee voted Monday, December 12 to establish a new goal of 25 percent for the SBE/VSBE Program in the current 2006 fiscal year, with a minimum of 5 percent of the eligible construction contracts to go to very small business enterprises. (Because of differing state and federal laws, the SBE/VSBE Program does not apply to Port projects supported by federal highway funds.)

"I'm very happy with these results, and I'd like to commend the staff," said Harbor Commission President Doris Topsy-Elvord at Monday's meeting. Afterward, she added, "Our program is providing opportunities to all companies big and small. Bringing in a bigger pool of businesses to bid for work benefits businesses throughout our community, and it saves the Port money."

The Port staff reported potential savings of at least \$700,000 based on a comparison of bids by SBE firms and non-SBE firms, concluding that larger businesses may bid higher on some projects because of higher overhead costs.

Of nine major contracts awarded in the 2005 fiscal year, six prime contracts worth \$15.3 million went to SBE/VSBE firms. Smaller businesses also participated as subcontractors in other contracts, bumping up the total participation for smaller businesses to \$16.8 million. In addition, they won contracts for smaller projects.

Under the SBE/VSBE program, the Port has been adding businesses to an online database with a simple registration and certification process so that the Port and larger firms can easily contact them. The Port has been regularly conducting training forums to help smaller businesses learn how to work with the Port. For more information about the program, call (562) 590-4146 or visit polb.com.

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