

ODOT expands opportunities for small business contracting

The Oregon Department of Transportation has started the statewide rollout of a program aimed at increasing contracting opportunities for Oregon small businesses. Successfully piloted in the Portland metropolitan area, the Small Contracting Program for Professional and Technical Services started statewide September 17.

The Small Contracting Program simplifies the procurement process so that firms can register for consideration as prime consultants for ODOT contracts valued at \$74,990 or less annually. To participate, small firms across the state are encouraged to complete a Request for Qualifications on ORPIN, the Oregon Procurement Information Network Web site, at <http://orpin.oregon.gov>. The RFQ is a short registration form that requests basic information

about the firm, its employees and its experience.

Once a small business has completed the RFQ process, it is added to a list of firms eligible for agency work in a variety of disciplines.

The Small Contracting Program was initially implemented as a pilot program in the Portland metropolitan area. More than 160 firms have been registered through the pilot program. To date, 10 firms are under contract through this program, with a total dollar value of nearly \$750,000. Five additional contracts are in the development stage and are expected to boost the contracted value to well over \$1 million.

Firms already registered as part of the pilot program do not need to reregister.

"We're making a concerted effort to find opportunities with-

in our projects that better suit local business communities' ability to compete," said Director Matt Garrett. "The importance of this opportunity for the growth of small business in transportation cannot be overstated. These businesses help strengthen the state's economy, create jobs, and bring diversity and innova-

tion to the transportation table. Put simply, this is good for small businesses, good for ODOT and good for the state."

The Small Contracting Program is part of ODOT's ongoing, statewide effort to develop the state's workforce through on-the-job training and apprenticeships; contract with more

women-, minority-owned and emerging small businesses; and increase diversity throughout the agency, its consultants and the contracted workforce.

To learn more about ODOT's Small Contracting Program, visit the Web site at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/smallcontractingprogram.shtml.

State seeks active farms, ranches owned by same family for 150 years

As Oregon begins to plan for its 150th birthday as a state in 2009, another sesquicentennial program is already underway.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program will celebrate its 50th year of activity by recognizing active farms and ranches throughout the state that have maintained family ownership of the same land for 150 years or more. This Sesquicentennial Award program will present its first round of awards at a special recognition event on February 14, 2008, at the state capitol in Salem.

Of 1,076 recognized Century Farms and Ranches in Oregon, there are over 400 that were established prior to 1859, the year Oregon became a state. It is estimated that some of those early farms are no longer in the same family ownership, having been sold since the Century Farm & Ranch Program was established in 1958.

Many of those that remain have deep roots in Oregon agriculture thanks to the Oregon Donation Land Law of 1850. That federal legislation validated legal title to land already claimed by white settlers in Oregon Territory and served as an inducement to encourage additional migration to Oregon by offering free land. William

Robbins, in his book, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story 1800-1940*, states that before the act expired in 1855, an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 immigrants, mostly of Euro-American descent, entered the territory, many of them with farming backgrounds. Most of the early claims were staked out in the fertile Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue valleys. Later, as most of the river valley bottomlands were already claimed, settlers began to seek out unclaimed land in coastal lowland valleys or higher-elevation interior valleys, and eastern Oregon.

Eligible family farmers and ranchers are urged to apply for the inaugural year of the award, submitting a completed application by the November 1, 2007 deadline. If applicants are not yet designated as a Century Farm or Ranch, an application for that status also needs to be completed.

Eligibility criteria, application guidelines and forms are available from Glenn Mason, Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program coordinator, at 503-297-5892 or orcentury@juno.com, or may be downloaded from the Oregon Department of Agriculture website at: <http://oregon.gov/ODA>.

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