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▶ SMBR CELEBRATES DIVERSITY IN CITY CONTRACTING IN AN ANNUAL AWARD CEREMONY (ALSO IN THE ARTICLE, HIGHLIGHT OF CONTRACTING RULE CHANGE EFFECTIVE I2011).....1

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ACA Newsletter

SMBR Celebrates Diversity in City Contracting in an Annual Award Ceremony (Also in the Article, Highlight of Contracting Rule Change effective 2011)

Austin, TX — Austin city officials and contractors gathered at the City Hall to celebrate diversity in contracting as the city continued to see a steady growth of minority population and business owners likewise thriving in central Texas.

The annual award ceremony was held on November 16th by the Small and Minority Business Resource Department (SMBR) to honor several minority contractors for their outstanding services to the city in the past year.

This is the fifth year that SMBR has presented the “Small Businesses of the Year” award, which is lauded by SMBR Director Veronica Lara as “the highest honor that SMBR awards.”

“In keeping with our mission, we recognize these companies due to their history of providing developmental opportunities and resources for our certified vendors,” commented the director.

These companies have been selected based on their work ethic, adherence to City ordinances and outreach efforts, according to SMBR.

Recipients of this year’s award are: Austin Lumber Co., CAS Consulting & Services Inc., Haynes-Eaglin-Waters, and T. Morales Electric Services & Controls Ltd.

The ceremony also recognized two minority subcontractors as “graduates,” whose personal net worth has exceeded the small business size standards set by the Small Business Administration. They are Dynamic Computing Services and Gorrondona & Associates Inc.

Also being recognized were the three SMBR service providers including Asian Contractor Association for their continued advocacy of the MBE and WBE procurement program for the City of Austin.

In 2010, SBR had proposed several city ordinance changes and WBE/MBE procurement program rule changes and one such proposal was adopted effective January 1 of 2011.

Under the new program rule 9.2.2., “Bidders/Proposers must notify MBEs and WBEs of subcontracting/subconsulting opportunities at least seven business days before submission to the bid/proposal.” The old rule stipulated five business days.

In February, 2010, SMBR proposed to expand the definition of good faith effort negotiation in Rule 9.1.2 to help level the playing field and also make it a mandatory requirement for bidders and proposers to negotiate in good faith with certified subcontractors. Bid-shopping is also prohibited under the proposal.

In July, changes were proposed on City Ordinance 2-9 to prohibit pre-award bid shopping. In addition, the change would make the act a sanctionable violation of the MBE/WBE program.

Below: SMBR Director Veronica Lara, second from left, conversing with contractors.



Above: Channy Soeur, owner of CAS Consulting & Services (right). Aletta Banks, Program Manager of Asian Contractor Association



Asian Contractors Corner



Mr. Channy Soeur is the owner of a dynamic engineering firm, specializing in civil, environmental and transportation engineering. In the past 11 years, CAS Consulting has grown from a 3 person business in Austin to a 20+ firm with offices in San Antonio and Dallas as well.

Prior to starting his own firm, Channy worked for the City of Austin for 16 years in various capacities including engineer, division manager, and assistant director for four different departments: Planning Department, Environmental Conservation & Services Department, Solid Waste Services Department, and Park & Recreation Department.

During the last 32 years, Channy has volunteered on a multitude of grass-roots and business advocate issues. He has served on the board of Directors for various organizations including Network of Asian-American Organizations, Austin Asian-American Chamber of Commerce, and Envision Central Texas.

In May 2004, Channy led a group of Asian Americans to organize a statewide business symposium held in Austin. The symposium resulted in the creation of the Texas Federation of Asian-American Chambers of Commerce, where Channy served as the first chairman of the board. The symposium raised \$130,000 to help build the Asian-American Resource Center in Austin. Additionally, Channy led volunteers in the Austin community to raise \$155,000 for the American Red Cross Tsunami Relief in January 2005.

Channy moved to Texas from Providence, Rhode Island, in 1979, where he first settled after his arrival in 1975 as a Cambodian refugee. Channy received his petroleum engineering degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1984. He is married to the former Laura Cole of Austin, Texas, and they have two children, Michelle and Adam, who are 21 and 17 years old respectively.

Below is a question and answer session with Mr. Soeur.

1. What brought you here to Austin?

I moved to Austin in 1979 to pursue my education at UT School of Petroleum Engineering.

2. Under what circumstances and motivations did you decide to start your own company?

I decided to start my own company while I was working at the City of Austin with an old friend named George Chang. Dr Chang was my engineering supervisor in the Water Quality section of Watershed Protection Department. In 1995, I started a conversation about forming our own engineering company once we retired from the City of Austin. George retired in 1998. We created the company in March 1999 called CAS Consulting & Services. (Editor's note: Dr. Chang now serves as the Executive Vice Chairman of Asian Contractor Association.)

3. What contributed to your success building your own company?

During my first year as co-owner of CAS, I worked about 80 hours a week and sometimes more. I had to prove to clients that I could do the job and I ex-

ceeded all their expectations. This became the model for the company. In order to meet expectations at CAS, employees exceed customer's expectations.

4. What are the challenges and triumphs you have experienced as a business owner and also as an Asian businessman?

The biggest challenge is to always place yourself in the position to compete for major pursuits. Subsequently, the biggest triumph is winning a major pursuit. I don't think being Asian makes it any different. All businessmen and women have to worry about the quality of goods and services and you also have to be mindful of your balance sheet. Sometimes human resource issues (hiring, training, retaining, and firing) can occupy your whole day but you must manage your time to be able to do it all. Marketing is not a science it is an art. Hopefully if you have done a good job on past performances, the client will invite you to come back. It is a small world out there and it is very competitive so any mistake can get magnified real big and news travels fast. You must maintain a good relationship with your bank. This is one of the key factors.

5. Any advice for those in the Asian community in pursuit of business opportunities with the City of Austin?

Network, network, network. You need to get to know the potential clients and let them get to know you.

6. Anything else you'd like to add?

Channy Soeur's List of Accomplishments

Assisted local small businesses to do business with national and international companies

Spearheaded Texas Federation of Asian American Chambers of Commerce Council and Committee Meeting on access to the State Capital

Spearheaded Texas Federation of Asian American Chambers of Commerce Council and Committee Meeting on Asian on Board

Led [Educational Series: Procurement Technical Assistance Center](#)

Spearheaded [Texas Federation of Asian American Chambers of Commerce Tracking Legislative Agenda and Initiative](#)

Led [Texas Federation of Asian American Chambers of Commerce Council & Committee Leadership Orientation](#)

Spearheaded [Getting the Win: Increase the Access, Opportunities and Influence of Asian Business Owners.](#)

Spearheaded [Establishing a New Level of Influence for Asian in Politics and the Political Machinery State-wide Asian's Business Symposium](#)

EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL. This page is dedicated to Asian entrepreneurs to share their stories. If you are interested in having a corner of your own in one of our issues, please contact Aletta by email at acta@cs.com.



News Briefs

► In an outreach luncheon held on December 2nd, Bruce Knox, President and CEO of the Formula 1 USA, (see top left photo), presented the blue print of the renown internal race track to minority contractors organizations. This is the first time that a Formula One facility will be built in the USA since 1980. Although Formula One races have seen great successes since then in various US cities, the tracks used have been only temporary street circus. This facility will be purpose-built from the ground up to bring the Formula One Grand Prix™ Event permanently to Austin, TX. A city-wide women and minority outreach event was held on December 6th at the Palmer Event Center. Austin Commercial is the general contractor for this project to be completed in 2012. For bidding information, please contact David Yeagy, Senior Project Manager, at 512-306-9880 or email at dyeagy@austin-ind.com.

► Incumbent and former council members, city officials, friends and families gathered on December 10th at the construction site on Cameron Road for the groundbreaking ceremony of CAS Consulting and Services. Among them were Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Mayor Pro Tem, Mike Martinez, and former Mayor Gus Garcia. (see bottom photo). CAS Consulting received the "Business of the Year" award from the Small and Minority Business Resources Department in November.

► More than 30 Asian business owners and professionals met for an annual networking event held by the Asian Contractor Association on December 21st. Executive Vice Chairman, George Chang (seen in top right photo standing) spoke to attendees about the history and purpose of the association that he and others founded more than a decade ago. Chairman Mahesh Naik, instrumental in establishing the non-profit organization, was also present and shed light on the political and business landscape in Austin that once paid no or little attention to the Asian community. With tireless efforts from many Asian community leaders including Naik and Chang, Austin now boasts itself as the only Texas city that officially recognizes the Asians as a minority group.

► The 15th Annual Lunar New Year Gala will be held on Saturday, February 5th, 2011 at the Bob Bullock Museum from 5:30pm to 9:30pm. Tickets are sold at www.txasianchamber.org. \$45 for TACC members, \$45 group rate (10 or more), \$50 for general public.

