



# SWMBE SPOTLIGHT

## SPRING 2008

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### How Bricks and Mortar Lead to A's and B's

Students who attend newer or modernized schools have a better chance of having a successful future. Statistics prove how students' education can be dramatically changed by the simple addition of ... a window.

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### Safety is a Priority with Richland One Contractors

Richland One set a goal of having zero accidents during its construction program that started in 2003. Find out if they met their goals by ...

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### Local SWMBEs Share Richland One Project Spotlight

Several small, women- and minority-owned business enterprises (SWMBEs) are sharing the spotlight for having been instrumental in the building program's success. To see exactly how they helped our community ...

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### Contact Information for the Richland One Construction Team

Richard Vaughn • Construction Contract Manager • (803) 231-7052  
Raymond Perkins • Facilities Director • (803) 231-7057  
LaShonda Outing • Procurement Manager • (803) 231-7037  
Michael Bobby • Chief Operations Officer • (803) 231-7008



The SWMBE Spotlight  
201 Park Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Managed By:



# How Bricks & Mortar Lead to A's & B's

In November of 2002, Richland One voters went to the polls and overwhelmingly approved a \$381 million bond referendum to upgrade the district's middle schools, high schools and stadiums. Many of the buildings were dated, and by today's teaching standards, just weren't making the grade. The District knew that modernized buildings could help prepare Richland One students to meet today's challenges and compete in tomorrow's global economy. They also recognized improved facilities could amplify student morale. Lastly, they understood that students who were properly prepared had enhanced morale that ultimately lead to heightened test scores.

**“The schools our district is building provide enhanced infrastructure to support technology, spacious media centers, production labs and spaces for students to work creatively throughout the building. These critical factors facilitate and support learning and engage students to help prepare them for their futures.”**

*-Ida Thompson, Director of Instructional Technology Services for Richland One*

**Schools equipped with advanced technology and room for students' creativity to flourish are key components for future success.** Bigger classrooms and unique design concepts that give more personalized attention will help prepare students to compete in tomorrow's global economy. For example, in New York, students interested in an advertising-related future were able to access design programs and specialty computers, where they could gain valuable experience before stepping into the “real world.”



**New construction or modernizing a school will amplify student morale.** Freshly painted walls, new furniture and landscaping are just a few factors to keep smiles on the faces of those who walk on school grounds. Concepts that are colorful, inviting and “sized” appropriately are proven to spark the creativity of students. Studies show that schools that are designed with more windows are the schools that get the students who chalk up fewer absences, score better on tests-- 20% better in math and 26% better in reading-- and interestingly enough have fewer cavities due to the UV rays received throughout the day, according to Pacific Gas and Electric of California.

**A new or modernized facility in general can also heighten students' test scores.** In fact, a statewide test was recently given in Florida where 63% of their schools with new library facilities scored a grade above the average or higher. In a recent Georgia study, fourth-grade students in non-modernized buildings recorded poorer results in basic skills assessment than those in newer or modernized buildings.

To date, over two-thirds of the district's 17 construction and renovation projects have been completed, and as final construction takes place in the Richland One bond construction program, students and teachers are giving thanks to the community that supported them and to a district that succeeded in passing the largest school bond issue in state history. The new and renovated facilities in Richland One will continue to play a vital role in South Carolina's education system for years to come, and for that, our community and our nation will benefit.





# Safety is a Priority With Richland One Contractors



Although Richland One's ultimate goal was to have zero accidents during its construction program, the District is pleased with the notable success of its safety program. Since the launch of the building program in 2003, there have only been six OSHA recorded accidents. This is a remarkable feat, considering the number of personnel who have had a hand in successfully completing nine major construction projects over more than 2,000 grueling work days.

Surveillance Resource and Investigation, LLC (SR&I), construction management firms and construction companies have aggressively worked together to keep the general public, students, district personnel and construction company employees in an accident/incident-free construction zone throughout the course of the District's construction program.



What is Richland One's safety program? The safety program was initiated by the district and is managed by SR&I. The program ensures conformity with all local, state and federal requirements, as well as other more stringent school district safety requirements. All construction contractors and subcontractors on all tiers of service are required to adhere to the program.

Lorenzo Jones, Safety Consultant for RCSDO, attributes the success of the program to the emphasis it places on contractors to be in compliance with standards set by the District. These standards include:

- Planning and conducting work with maximum safety precautions in accordance with the policies set forth by OSHA, the District and SR&I.
- Providing and requiring the use of personal protective equipment, mechanical or structural guards and other safety-related items.
- Adhering to pre-employment drug and alcohol screenings.
- Maintaining all pertinent safety records, including accident reporting.
- Appointing a Safety Representative to coordinate training, on-going inspections and new hire safety orientations.

Industry experts agree that all *successful* construction projects must be under the guidance and constraints of three ruling factors:

1. **Maintenance of cost controls;**
2. **Upholding the timely completion of various phases; and**
3. **A compulsory safety program.**

If any of these components are undervalued by the owner, construction management team or contractor, the likelihood of a successful construction project diminishes proportionally. Clearly, the enactment of a well-tuned safety program has helped lead to the overall success of the Richland One building program.





# Local SWMBEs Share RCSDO Project Spotlight

As the Richland One "Schools for the 21st Century" project nears its concluding phases, several small, women- and minority-owned businesses are sharing the spotlight for having been instrumental in the building program's success.

*"Participating in the district's building program was both rewarding and satisfying. We served as the Construction Manager on more than five of the 17 school projects, and it was gratifying to see everyone's hard work pay off. I really enjoyed watching students fill the classrooms."*

*-Nate Spells, Owner CDI*

Construction Management Firms EnviroAg Science and Construction Dynamics, Inc. (CDI) are two minority-owned firms who served as CM's on many of the district's construction projects. These two firms have participated in the RCSDO building program from beginning to end and have gained from their experiences.

As a 20 year member of the Clemson University Board of Trustees, Dr. Louis Lynn is aware of how well Richland One students have done in college. He understands that these new facilities will help to better prepare current and future generations of students to be more competitive in the 21st century global economy.

*"Our firm is particularly pleased to be a part of improving one of South Carolina's largest school districts with much needed new construction and renovation. We wish them all success in their bright futures."*

*-Dr. Louis Lynn, President ENVIRO AgScience*

The two Construction Managers also noted that their successes could not have occurred without the hard work of the many SWMBE subcontractors working with them on each of the schools projects. Both acknowledged that the dedication and fine craftsmanship of the SWMBE contractors greatly impacted the building program's accomplishments.

## SWMBE firms participating in district projects included:

- Boyles Enterprises
- Burris Electrical
- Corley Construction
- Dixiana Steel
- G. R. Masonry
- Gordon & Associates
- Middleton Painting
- Patterson Masonry
- Sanders Concrete Finishing
- Spectrum Fabrication
- Taylor Brothers Construction
- Timmons Brick, LLC

As final tallies take place, firms such as CDI, EnviroAg Science and many others contributed to the district's goal of 15% SWMBE participation in this building program. This percentage was met or exceeded by many of the projects undertaken during the six-year building program, thanks in part to the district's eagerness to implement strategies that promoted the inclusion of SWMBEs. Tactics embraced by the district like:

- **Sponsoring teaming sessions**, which brought large and small firms together and encouraged them to partner in pursuit of contracts;
- **Hiring a business development firm**, DESA, Inc., to alert and offer support to SWMBEs who might be interested in gaining work through this program; and
- **Offering training** to help equip firms to effectively participate in school construction process.

Strategies like these, along with the district's unwavering commitment to providing opportunities to SWMBEs, resulted in the financial growth, capacity expansion and business development of these and other firms in the Midlands of South Carolina.