

October 18, 2002

To: Invited Participants for a Peer Exchange Study of Our  
WisDOT/FHWA – Wisconsin DBE Program

Dear Participants:

## **RE: Invitation and Background Information**

### **BACKGROUND**

We are excited to invite your participation in a unique opportunity, which may assist the ongoing improvements of DBE programs and services at WisDOT and FHWA-WI.

During the week of November 18-21, a team of peers will conduct individual or small group interviews with DBE program customers, stakeholders and staff. The purpose of the “Peer Exchange Study” is to use the eyes of others to help us pursue program excellence and find ways to strengthen our business related program. FHWA and WisDOT are engaging in the study for the purpose of improving quality. We have room for improvement, and we want to position our program for the success across the state. We do not expect the study to leap ahead of other program advisory services, nor do we expect the study to be all-inclusive or comprehensive. The peer exchange is about excellence; if any compliance related issues would surface we would defer them for later review.

### **DETAILS**

The peer exchange team will be asking invitees in various groupings **a series of four questions for each of the three following specific focus areas:**

- Business Assistance and Development (such as one-on-one consulting services; capacity building services)
- Contract Administration, Good Faith Efforts, and Certification
- Commercially Useful Function/Fraud

**The four questions for each focus area are:**

- What are the Strengths?
- What are the Opportunities for Improvement and What are the Impediments to Fill Gaps
- What are the Observations for Overcoming Impediments
- What Models, Best Practices, or Future Directions Should We Study for Adoption

**The Peer Exchange Study Team Members Are:**

Nina McLawhorn – WisDOT (Team Leader)  
Charles Klemstine- FHWA (Washington D.C.) – Team #2  
Anita Elion – FHWA (Midwest Resource Center) – Team #1  
Jan Thompson – FHWA (Iowa) – Team #2  
Roger Bierbaum – Iowa-DOT – Team #1  
Sharon Taegel – Missouri-DOT – Team #1  
David Stokes – Independent – Team #2  
Alvin Wilson – Kentucky DOT – Team #2

The outcomes of the Peer Exchange Study will be prepared and documented by the team members, and a report shared in a closeout conference with WisDOT and FHWA. Key policy issues and the team report would also be brought to the DBE Transportation Advisory Committee (TRANS-AC). The models and potential improvements would then be reviewed for consistency and fit with business plans and future strategic directions.

**ARRANGEMENTS**

The Peer Exchange Teams will hold all of the interviews and meetings at the Hill Farms State Transportation Building in Madison (see attachment for conference rooms, dates, and times.)

**It is anticipated that each interview will take about 1½ hrs (see attachment regarding team setup and grouping). Please contact Annie Sykes at (608) 266-6961 by November 8, 2002 to confirm attendance. There is limited opportunity to adjust schedules but we will try to accommodate you as needed.**

**We are willing to reimburse you for basic travel and/or lodging expenses, more on that process later.**

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

We both sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate, and we thank you in advance for your time and contributions.

Sincerely,

Gary C. Whited, P. E.  
Administrator



Bruce Matzke,  
Division Administrator, FHWA-WI

Attachment

cc: Eugene Johnson  
Mary Williams  
Peer Exchange Team  
Jim Zegers