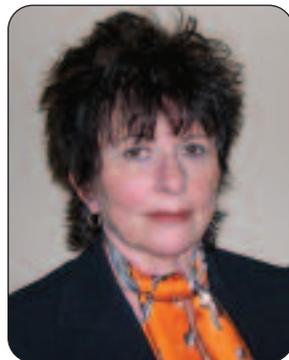


There for the Asking DBE Experts Bridge the Gap



Clockwise: Nancy West, managing member, and Linda Moore, senior partner, Exstare Federal Services Group, LLC ; Carol Coover-Clark, principal architect, Coover-Clark & Associates, P.C.; Tess Snipes, president, Above and Beyond Consulting, LLC; Mario Trevino, president, Innovative Strategies; Joan Woods, principal and president, ACC, Inc.

BY EVONN GIBBS

When it comes to the complex issues involving airport concession disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) programs, consulting a DBE specialist can be the next best thing to walking a mile in the other party's shoes.

The A-to-Z of the program demands that each party have some understanding of the roles of both the public and private sector, and that requires access to various information resources, and effective communication. Available to facilitate those needs, are six companies that specialize in advising DBEs, prime concessionaires, and/or airports, in DBE-related issues. Below are their comments and company profiles.

**TESS SNIPES, PRESIDENT,
ABOVE AND BEYOND
CONSULTING, LLC, ATLANTA, GA**

Tess Snipes, who has an M.B.A. in finance from the prestigious Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, has built her consulting practice, established in October 2002, by relying solely on word-of-mouth referrals. The firm provides aviation and management consulting services and travel planning to a diverse group of clients including tenants at Hartsfield-Jackson International. The company also operates an off-airport Avis Car Rental operation.

"The most visible work we have done

has been to prepare RFPs for both airports and concessionaires. We have also worked on policies with regard to local business participation and resolution of contractual issues."

Above and Beyond also advises on concessions management, airport properties and real estate issues, PFC programs, and capital projects funding. Snipes has over 20 years of experience in the transportation industry, providing management consulting services to airport managers, airlines and other public and private entities including Aviation Resource Partners, LLC, and United Airlines, where she also managed real estate. In previous roles Snipes was

involved in concession operations in Atlanta, Chicago, Philadelphia and Orlando.

Snipes says one of the challenges facing DBE concessionaires is the time and expense associated with developing concepts and proposals with no guarantee of award. "Part of our service is to assess whether the opportunity is viable and worth the initial investment of developing the proposal."

JOAN WOODS, PRINCIPAL AND PRESIDENT, AND CINDY OLIVARES, PRINCIPAL, AIRPORT CONCESSION CONSULTANTS, KNOWN AS ACC, INC., WOODLAND HILLS, CA

ACC, Inc. represents airports only, in concession planning projects. "We both came from Marriott-Host. I was director of accounting procedures, and Cindy was vice president of planning and administration," says Woods. "We felt we were a real asset because we knew the inside workings of the airport concession business. Our intent was strictly to do concession planning. The DBE program at the time was just coming into its own. We felt our expertise was knowing what the airports needed." In 2000 ACC received an award from the FAA

for "outstanding achievement in facilitating the development and implementation of DBE programs in major airports," says the company profile.

"When DBE issues came to the fore," says Woods, "in the beginning the airport would hire us to bring them through the process of setting up their airport operation. We did that just in the very first year because that was the type of work we could get."

Now ACC, Inc. has a number of contracts, the oldest of which is with John Wayne Airport (SNA), in Santa Anna, says Woods. "We just recently were awarded an RFP for DBE program administration there. All our contracts have been won through RFPs." The company handles everything relative to SNA's DBE program including setting goals; FAA goal reporting, and writing ACDBE implementation plans as the revised Part 23 rule now requires. "Anytime there are DBE issues we deal with them either internally or externally," says Woods, "for instance, if someone is complaining about not being treated fairly, the airport could have us do an investigation.

"You always have a lot of things to balance," says Olivares, "and we always feel rewarded when the outcome is a nice

balance of fulfilling the needs of the airport, the concessionaire, and the DBE community. If we're doing a concession plan we look at many things, such as the history, current trends, passenger demographics, available locations, exposure, how things might be configured, adjacencies. You have to be careful when you do DBE planning because the last thing you want is to put people in opportunities that aren't viable. And it's especially important if the airport is directly leasing to the DBE; they need to make sure the operator is financially able to perform."

CAROL COOVER-CLARK, PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT, COOVER-CLARK & ASSOCIATES, P.C., DENVER, CO.

"We are architects, designers and planners," says Coover-Clark. The firm designs landscapes and interiors, and "anything to do with airports both for airports and airport tenants. We have worked on about 15 airports nationwide to date ranging from Alaska to New York. It's fun, we get to travel." The architectural firm has been in business 20 years

"We seek out DBE tenants to work with," says Coover-Clark. The firm

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provides DBEs with services ranging from helping them develop their RFPs by providing graphics, costs, and design expertise. "Sometimes that means meeting airport design guidelines, and sometimes it means creating a fresh look for a tenant that hasn't been in an airport before. For example, we did the colors and graphics as well as the drawings for building El Pollo Loco restaurant for an RFP at Denver International."

Coover-Clark Associates represents stand-alone tenants as well as on-airport inline food and retail tenants," says its owner. The company just completed one of its biggest tenant projects—a consolidated car rental facility at Kansas City International. "There is one DBE in there, Fox Rent-a-Car," says Coover-Clark, "and the neat thing for Fox is that this consolidated facility allowed them to compete with the national brands. There's a common lobby and everybody has an equal presence in front of the customer. The consolidation also allows DBEs to participate in a program where the facility itself pays the customer facility charge (CFC); so by participating in the CFC program they get brand new facilities, and service facilities for the cars, at no out-of-pocket expense. Typically in car rental they have had to fund their own facilities themselves. The major brands have the financial resources to build their own, but the DBEs don't," adds Coover-Clark.

"We typically assist tenants in wading through the airport process as it relates to design and construction," says Coover-Clark. "We represent and advise them not only on guidelines but any particulars in terms of the approval process. We also help them with construction documents. Sometimes they come in with national brands, or alone, and we retool it for the airport, or we create a custom design for them. In addition to the design service we help them select the contractor and help them oversee the construction to make sure it meets their guidelines as well as being completed on time and on budget."

Coover-Clark says the firm's goal has been to approach designs with innovation and creativity, as well as practicality in implementation. For example, in keeping with changing trends in airports such as the demand for grab & go, the firm creates space so that it is easy for travelers to get in and out of a retail or food spot very quickly. "It's a matter of looking at passenger flows and how retailers want

to present themselves," she adds.

NANCY WEST, MANAGING MEMBER,
EXSTARE FEDERAL SERVICES
GROUP, LLC, ALEXANDRIA, VA

"Exstare means to be highly visible, to be prominent," says West of the name she chose for her company. "We're an airport and business consulting firm that started in May 2005." Clients include Richmond International; HDS Retail N.A. and Hartsfield Hospitality, LLC.

In August 2006, Linda Moore joined Exstare as senior partner. Moore was formerly vice president, government affairs for HMSHost, and before that assistant airport director, Lambert-St. Louis where she developed and implemented the DBE business program.

Both consultants are past chairs of AMAC. West has received awards and currently serves as associate representative for the ACI-NA business diversity subcommittee and is a member of the steering group for the economic committee.

"I have a rare combination of aviation, legislation, federal agency and private sector experience," says West, who was formerly senior vice president of public relations at the governmental affairs firm Xenophon Strategies. She was senior policy advisor at Thelen Reid law firm representing clients on public policy matters on Capitol Hill, and on airport concessions and construction DBE programs. Before that she was assistant secretary for Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority for 11 years, and before that special assistant in the USDOT office of the secretary.

"My fun comes with running this company. Part of the reason I started Exstare was to address long-term needs of airport concessions, and when Part 23 rules changed it created a lot of new requirements for both parties, and thus some challenges in implementing and following the rules. We represent both airports and airport concession DBEs, but not at the same airports of course. We support airports in developing highly successful DBE programs and help small business in securing airport concession contracts on a broader scale," says West.

"Our practice is specifically focusing on policy issues involving the airport concession rules or if a DBE has been denied certification they call us and ask for our help," says West. "We get involved where the DBE may have been denied

certification, and we really have to delve deeply into the rules and interpret and write appeals. That's our specialty. These cases can get pretty complicated and we find we have challenges in how the airports interpret specifications and compliance, and program implementation.

Opportunities are being lost by DBEs because companies have been decertified or were not certified when they should have been because of the misapplication or misinterpretation of the new Part 23 rules...and I think that situation deters the goals of the program."

MARIO TREVINO, IS PRESIDENT OF
INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES,
SAN ANTONIO, TX.

As one of the early pioneers in public diversity initiatives, and certainly in airport construction and concessions DBE programs, Trevino has received many accolades over the past 20 years, including being one of a small group who has been inducted into the AMAC hall of fame.

His career began with his master's thesis and internship with San Antonio's city manager's office where he learned through his own research project there were regulations about small business participation in the aviation department that weren't being addressed. "It struck a nerve because my dad always worked for himself and he never said he had a business even though he had employees, because he couldn't borrow to grow the business." Because of that Trevino wrote his master's thesis on developing a program for minorities. "I wrote it to change the world."

He actually did change San Antonio in developing the city's diversity program, and was in charge of procurement of construction and environmental management projects procurement. It didn't involve the airport but that's where he learned about satisfying federal requirements from the ground up. Trevino made a name for himself and a few years later Dallas-Ft. Worth International (DFW) hired him to create a business diversity program. After 15 years he left as director of minority and economic affairs and left a legacy that was awarded by the FAA and provided a template for other airports asking for guidance.

Particularly pertinent now is Trevino's role in the creation of a centralized certification center. "It was the prototype we used to

recommend to the feds to do their unified certification program. It took us three years. It wasn't easy. I give a lot of people credit in the community because I got frustrated and wanted to quit several times."

In August 2001 Trevino started Innovative Strategies, which handles DBE policy, program development, and program implementation for minority economic development. "On the concession side we had great success representing private sector franchisors in accessing nontraditional markets like airports, arenas, universities and the military. I find the most qualified and politically connected minority DBE firm for the business association they need to present to the airport. Whether a joint venture, or subtenant partner, Trevino assists DBEs by finding them venues and partners. "I work more for the majority firm that wants to know how to structure the deal to find the capable DBE firm or franchisee, so I represent several of the larger minority firms, i.e. Manchu Wok, Villa Enterprises Management, and Branded Works/Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers. We also represent several other folks such as News & Gift Shops International. We also represent DBEs that want to get into airports and other nontraditional arenas."

KEN WEEDEN, PRESIDENT,
KEN WEEDEN & ASSOCIATES
(KWA), CHARLOTTE, VA

Weeden describes KWA as an 18 year-old full-service DBE program consulting firm, with a long history of expertise in both Part 26 and Part 23 airport DBE programs. He says KWA prepared numerous concession plans under the old Subpart F rules, prior to the implementation of many changes under Part 26, "and immediately adopted the two-step process for concessions even before the new ACDBE rules were finalized." Since the recent change to 49 CFR Part 23 was made in April 2005, he says, "KWA has helped to develop new concession programs and goal methodologies, including car rental goals, for 18 primary airports or authorities."

During his career, Weeden was instrumental in the development of US DOT/FAA/FTA DBE administrative programs and annual goal methodologies. Weeden says he founded his company with an "initial primary focus on aviation and transportation planning support for underutilized business enterprise programs, such as the USDOT

DBE program for airports and transit systems and local minority/women business enterprise programs. Our goal, he adds, "is to continue to provide the highest quality of professional dedicated services to our growing family of clients in all of our major service areas."

Weeden's expertise includes development of concession plans and preparation of annual reports using the new rule. The company has been preparing concession plans and reports since the initial draft of the regulations in the early 1990's, he says, and "through the evolution in response to major Supreme Court decisions," to the challenges brought about by the revised 49 CFR Parts

23 and 26. "KWA has followed this evolution closely as an active participant," says Weeden, "working closely with, and providing input directly to the FAA Civil Rights Office in several regions and with numerous airport clients."

KWA meets DBE client wishes and needs through developing project-specific goals: conducting detailed good faith efforts; review, certification of new firms for clients; and compliance monitoring for DBE program requirements. 

We'd like to hear your opinion about this article. Please direct all correspondence to Evonn Gibbs at evonn@airportrevenue.com

InMemoriam



Billie Swan Paradies

The beloved wife of Dan Paradies, Billie Paradies, passed away on May 3, 2007 at the age of 71 after bravely battling lung disease for the past few years. The couple had been together for nearly 40 years and shared both business and cultural interests. "She was the perfect partner and the light of my life," says Dan, founder of the Paradies Shops, which owns and operates over 500 stores in over 67 airports and other high traffic venues, including three stores in The Georgia Aquarium. "It was all so sudden and I miss her so very much," he says.

Billie grew up in Atlanta and graduated from the University of Georgia with a major in Art History. She began a career in design and eventually became vice president of The Paradies Shops where she handled the import merchandising division and store design.

Her love of art continued throughout her life and was reflected in her collection of Asian artworks and English sculpture.

Her friends describe her as a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and friend. She is survived by her husband Dan; sons, Richard and Jed Paradies and Robert Brown; daughters, Susan Terino and Allison Brown; grandchildren, Logan, Julia and Jacob Paradies, Michael Anton and Taylor Terino; sisters, Punky Lincoln, Sally Rollins and several nieces and nephews. Friends can sign her on-line guest book by linking to: www.edressler.com.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Ahavath Achim Synagogue for the Billie Paradies Fund. Contact 770.451.4999 for more information.