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ODOT Targets Small Business with New Contracting Program

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The Oregon Department of Transportation is piloting a new program aimed at increasing contracting opportunities for Oregon small businesses. In partnership with small business community leaders, American Council of Engineering Companies and other stakeholders, ODOT plans to boost the participation of Oregon businesses in transportation projects; eventually on a statewide basis.

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The Small Contracting Program for Professional and Technical Services pilot program focuses on ODOT's Region 1, the Portland metropolitan area. It involves changes to the agency's normal procurement process that make it easier for small businesses to participate.

Firms that pre-qualify by completing a simplified Request for Qualifications process have the opportunity to be selected as prime contractors for ODOT contracts valued at \$75,000 or less. Selection criteria include giving preference to firms that have no existing contracts as a prime with ODOT.

The RFQ, posted on ORPIN, consists of a short form that requests basic information about the firm, its employees and its experience. Firms may pre-qualify by completing the RFQ process at any time through Nov. 30, 2010, to be included in the selection pool for pilot program contract awards.

ODOT will review the pilot program results, gather input from participants, make adjustments as needed and roll out the Small Contracting Program to a greater audience in 2007.

The Small Contracting Program for Professional and Technical Services 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 contractors and the contracted workforce.