

REGISTER

VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals Using Innovative Tools to Make a Record Number of Decisions

WASHINGTON — Strengthened by innovative tools, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently issued a record number of decisions for Veterans appealing their disability benefits claims.

As of July 11, VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals has issued more than 64,025 decisions for fiscal year 2018, a record high tied to several efficiency innovations, including a new interactive decision template and a specialty case team, which have allowed the Board to serve more Veterans.

"Decisions made by the Board affect Veterans' lives and it's up to VA to keep improving this process," said VA Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "We will continue to innovate throughout VA even while employing the new tools that are already making the process better for service to Veterans."

Some examples of those important decisions made by the Board include:

- Collaborating with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), within 24 hours of a Board hearing, to begin disbursement of nearly \$50,000 in benefits to a homeless widow of a retired Veteran;
- Saving a Veteran from foreclosure due to quick action from VBA, the Board, and a local Veterans Service Organization; and
- Ensuring that a terminally ill Veteran on life support received qualifying benefits quickly after the Board was able to draft, issue and dispatch a decision-granting benefits expeditiously.

"Our goal is to provide answers to Veterans and their families," said Chairman Cheryl L. Mason, Board of Veterans' Appeals. "We will continue to do so as expeditiously as possible with improved customer service while employing every efficiency."

The mission of VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals is to conduct hearings and deliver decisions on appeals in a timely manner. Final decisions on such appeals are made by the Board based on all of the evidence, including the Veteran's medical records, and consideration of applicable provisions of law and regulation.

For more information about the Veterans appeals process, visit www.bva.va.gov/.

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Contract Disputes are Getting Longer, and More Complex

Construction contract disputes across the world are getting longer, more complex and more expensive, according to the "Global Construction Disputes Report 2018" from design and consultancy firm Arcadis. The value of North American disputes — or total costs added to a project for the additional work being claimed — dropped for a fourth consecutive year to \$19 million in 2017, compared with the \$43 million global average, the report found. Meanwhile, the average length of North American disputes increased from 15.6 months in 2016 to 17.7 months last year, exceeding the global average of 14.8 months.

Contract errors and/or omissions were the top cause of disputes in North America last year, followed by poor contract administration, which was trailed by failure on the part of an owner, contractor or subcontractor to understand or comply with contractual obligations. Social infrastructure and the public sector collectively saw the most disputes while the transportation sector saw the second most.

Contract and specification review was the most effective technique for claims avoidance in 2017, the report found, while an owner or contractor's willingness to compromise was most critical for mitigating or resolving disputes early on. Further, the report found that project teams that use early resolution techniques reach a settlement with 82% success.

The larger the scope and price tag of a project, the more possibilities there are for disagreements and misunderstandings between contracted parties.

U.S. Infrastructure projects, specifically, are trending larger and more complex as state, local and private entities ramp up their improvement plans ahead of President Donald Trump's \$1.5 trillion spending plan, on hold until November. And multibillion-dollar projects in this category can be wracked with contractual challenges and project delays.

For example, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority fired lead contractor consortium White-Skanska-Kiewit (WSK) from Boston's delay-plagued \$2.2 billion Green Line extension in 2015 due to a mishandled contracting process. The authority cleaned up its contract management process prior to awarding the Fluor-led GLX Constructors a \$1 billion contract in November. The project nearly collapsed during the 2015 contract disputes, the Boston Globe reported, but after a fourth groundbreaking ceremony, it now looks to open December 2021.

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Spieß Construction Company, Inc. Is Requesting Sub-bids from Qualified **MBE/WBE/DBE** Subcontractors/Suppliers for the following project:

Town of Mammoth Lakes
Public Works Department

For Construction on State Hwy in Mono County in Mammoth Lakes At Lake Mary Road

Contract No. 09-36530 / Project No. CAP 15-002
Bids Due: August 8, 2018 @ 4:00 PM

Location: Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, California

Seeking, but not limited to the following: **Concrete, Traffic Control, Trucking, AC Paving, Striping.**

100% Performance & Payment Bonds may be required.
For more information, please visit our website:
www.sccitanks.com

Spieß Construction Company, Inc.

PO Box 2849 - Santa Maria, CA 93457
Contact: Scott Coleman
Ph: 805-937-5859 Fax: 905-934-4432
Email: info@sccitanks.com

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ad# 70273

Granite Rock Company is requesting sub-bids from qualified **DBE** Subcontractors / Suppliers for the following project:

CALTRANS - Contract No. 05-1F0804

For Construction on State Highway in Monterey County at Various Locations From 2.5 Miles North of the San Luis Obispo County Line to 0.6 Mile South of Malpas Creek Bridge - In District 05 On Route 1
Bid Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2018 at 2:00 PM

Location: Big Sur, CA. / Estimate: \$2,510,000.

All bid items are available particularly these: Lead Compliance Plan, Construction Area Signs, Traffic Control, PCMS, Prepare WPCP, Erosion Control including Hydroseeding, Clearing and Grubbing, Landscape & Irrigation, Soil Anchor, Bore Jack Trenchless Culvert, Storm Drain, Pipe Supply, Slurry-Cement Backfill, Rock Slope Protection, Misc. Iron & Steel, Stain Galvanized Surfaces, Rock Stain, Temporary Fence, Remove Fence, MBGR, Pavement Marker, Object Marker, Striping, & Trucking.

Granite Rock Company 'Graniterock' is signatory to Operating Engineers, Laborers, Teamsters, Carpenters and Cement Masons unions. Plans and Specifications are available in our Estimating Office located at 5225 Hellyer Avenue, Suite 220, San Jose, or electronically at Caltrans Office Engineer website www.dot.ca.gov/hq/est/oe/. 100% payment and 100% performance bonds in the amount of the subcontractor's bid will be required from a qualified surety company. Subcontractors must possess a current contractor's license, DIR number, insurance and worker's compensation coverage. Bonding assistance is available. Graniterock will pay bond premium up to 1.5%. In addition to bonding assistance, subcontractors are encouraged to contact Graniterock Estimating with questions regarding obtaining lines of credit, insurance, equipment, materials and/or supplies, or with any questions you may have. Subcontractors will be required to enter into our standard contract. DBE Subcontractors must be listed by the CUCP for the work code(s) that apply to the scope of work they are quoting. Graniterock will break down items of work to facilitate DBE participation. Graniterock intends to work cooperatively with all qualified DBE firms seeking work on this project. Granite Rock Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Granite Rock Company

5225 Hellyer Avenue, Suite 220, San Jose, CA 95138
Phone: (408) 574-1400 Fax: (408) 365-9548
Email: estimating@graniterock.com
Contact Person: Randy Bonino

ad# 53079

AMG & Associates, Inc. Is Requesting Sub-bids from Qualified **SBE/DBE** Subcontractors/Suppliers for the following project:

Ontario International Airport Authority

SWA & MTS Cargo Relocation Project at Ontario International Airport

Bids Due: Thursday, August 9, 2018 @ 11:00 AM

Location: Ontario, San Bernardino County, California

Project Valuation: \$5,000,000.

Seeking, but not limited to the following services and/or products:

Demolition, Grading, Earthwork, Site Utilities, Asphalt Paving, Concrete, Doors, Frames & Hardware, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fire Sprinklers.

SCOPE: The project includes demolition of existing storage facilities, site civil improvements, design and installation of two fabric structures, utilities connection point for pre-fabricated office (trailer), all utilities shut-offs and connections, along with other related improvements as shown on the plans.

AMG & Associates, Inc.

28296 Constellation Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Contact: David Silva

Email: dsilva@amgassociatesinc.com

Ph: 661.251.7401 - Fax: 661.251.7405

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ad# 53773

Bakersfield Well & Pump Company Requesting sub-bids from qualified **MBE/WBE/DBE** subcontractors/suppliers for the following:

Arvin Community Service District

Well #1 Abandonment Project

Bids Due: August 9, 2018 @ 3:00 PM

Location: Arvin, Kern County, California

Seeking: Concrete, Ready-Mix Suppliers

100% Performance and Payment Bonds may be required. Please call for assistance with bonding, line of credit, insurance or other information to help obtain any necessary equipment, supplies or materials needed for this project.

Bakersfield Well & Pump Company

7212 Fruitvale Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93308

Phone: (661) 393-9661 - Fax: (661) 393-9647

Contact: Kenny Baird

Email: kbaird@bwpumps.com

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ad# 51005x

M/W/D/DBE SUB-BIDS REQUESTED