

Reaching New Heights

Diverse Businesses Key To Constructing Nation's Tallest Green Building

(NAPSA)—What started as a project to build the nation's tallest "green" skyscraper also became an example of how to prioritize diversity in business practices.

A recently completed, 975-foot office tower in Philadelphia was built by a number of minority-owned businesses, as well as businesses owned by women and people with disabilities. In creating the Comcast Center tower, the companies behind the construction committed to a rarely seen level of diversity, setting goals of 40 percent inclusion of minority-, women- and disabled-owned businesses (MWDB) for construction and 60 percent inclusion for furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E).

While many builders commit to minority-owned contractors in an effort to win government funding, David L. Cohen, executive vice president of Comcast, said, "We sought minority-, women- and disabled-owned business participation in an effort to involve the whole community in this project. There were numerous times when we went back and asked for increased diversity in the bid package."

To that end, a committee was created to oversee the minority, women and disabled business contracting process and outreach took place through regional African-American Chambers of Commerce as well as Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.

"The process brought a lot of contractors into the mix from communities not often involved in a project of this magnitude," said former Philadelphia Phillie Garry Maddox, who currently serves as CEO of A. Pomerantz, a workplace and office furniture



Towering Achievement—A new skyscraper was built largely by minority-owned businesses.

supplier that provided furniture for the building.

Indeed, nearly \$100 million worth of vendor contracts related to construction activity were awarded to 73 MWDBs, which comprised 45 percent of the vendors on the project. On a combined basis, more than 30 percent of the qualified construction contracts entered into by Comcast and Liberty Property Trust, the building's developer, went to MWDBs. Additionally, 69 percent of the FF&E contracts were awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses. Moreover, 338,000 hours of work were performed by minorities and women, representing 21 percent of all hours worked on the project.

"The building is a shining example of what communities can achieve when they work together," said Karen Daroff, CEO of Daroff Design Inc., an interior design firm that designed Comcast's interior space. "We are all proud of the high-quality result of this collaborative effort."