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UMTA REPORT ON MINORITY BUSINESS TRANSIT ACTIVITIES RELEASED AT DOT CIVIL RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Urban Mass Transportation Administrator Arthur E. Teele, Jr., today released a special report which outlines strategies for expanding Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) in transit activities.

"For the past two years, this agency has placed special emphasis on the MBE issue and has opened the door for expanded minority business participation in UMTA programs," Teele said. He said the report will prove useful to metropolitan planning and transit operating agencies."

Release of the report came in conjunction with the Department of Transportation sponsored Conference on Civil Rights, December 6-7, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Washington, D.C.

"The Department of Transportation reaffirms its sensitivity to MBE issues and its determination to provide metropolitan planning and transit officials a better understanding of how they can work effectively with minority business in transit planning, construction, operation, procurement and land development activities," Teele said.

Entitled A Study to Identify Effective, Efficient, and Transferable Minority Business Enterprise Strategies Within a Multi-Modal Transit System, the report was prepared for the Department of Transportation by Resources, Inc., a minority-owned Washington, D.C.-based research and consulting firm.

Staff capacity in the MBE area has been expanded and the program has been identified as a "national emphasis area" in UMTA's FY83 planning program. A new position, Minority Business Enterprise Planning Specialist, has been created to develop MBE strategy.

Wallace M. Katz has been selected for this post. Katz came to UMTA from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he served as an Assistant Development Director and Program Support Advisor to the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Program at HUD.

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"The job of MBE specialist is a particularly difficult one, because it requires the incumbent to possess both the knowledge, and the sensitivity to inject a delicate, sometimes controversial, and high-priority concern such as MBE into the Agency's ongoing programs agency, integrating MBE objectives, programs, and policies with UMTA's planning, capital, and operating assistance programs," Teele said.

The MBE specialist will be responsible for a thorough review of MBE planning activities in UMTA Headquarters and field offices, as the first step in developing an expanded program which will include both internal and external training activities, technical assistance, and identification of positive criteria conducive to minority business participation in transit activities.

The Resources, Inc., report, as a part of this effort:

- o Identifies the respective MBE functions of UMTA, transit agencies, and minority contractors, advocates, and businesses;
- o Identifies those points in transit development where decisions affecting MBE participation are made;
- o Identifies potential mechanisms, to be installed at such critical entry points, which would ensure that MBE participation is fairly considered; and
- o Identifies and enhances minority business opportunities during transit system development.

Teele asserted that UMTA's efforts in behalf of MBE are consistent with President Reagan's long-term strategy for job development and economic recovery.

Teele said, "The best way to create jobs, particularly jobs for minorities, is to expand minority entrepreneurs' access to business opportunities. Today, the Department of Transportation has taken an important first step toward fulfilling a long overdue commitment to the American minority community."

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