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The construction team for the new Minneapolis Public Schools John B. Davis Education and Service Center on West Broadway in north Minneapolis has exceeded its women and minority participation goals for the 173,000 square foot building.
The team of Mortenson/THOR Construction announced that 51 percent ($12.9 million) of the $25 million in contracts issued were awarded to women and minority owned firms, far exceeding the goal of 25 percent. Fifty-one percent is the highest percentage Women and Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE) participation ever achieved by Mortenson /THOR Construction.

In total, 80 different firms received contracts, including 21 minority-owned businesses and 23 women-owned firms. Twenty-four of the WMBE firms were subcontractors, 18 were suppliers and two were trucking firms. The size of the contracts ranged from $250 to $2 million.

Goals for diversity in the workforce were 25 percent for minority workers and 5 percent for female workers. Actual workforce percentages were 27 percent minority and 10 percent female. Total workers on site were 759, with 156 minority and 50 female with a total of 133,016 hours worked on the project.

"When we started this project, one of our core objectives was to have a strong representation of Women and Minority Owned Businesses included," said James Burroughs, executive director of the MPS Office of Equity and Diversity. "Through strong collaborations with the Mortenson/Thor/Legacy Management team and the community at large, we were able to far exceed our goal for minority business and women participation along with workforce participants."

"We are proud of this achievement," said Lynn Littlejohn, director of community affairs for Mortenson Construction. "Strong community participation is vitally important to Minneapolis Public Schools, and by working with WMBE firms and having a variety of contract sizes we were able to exceed expectations."

"These numbers prove that we can have a diverse workforce and, as well as minority and women-owned construction subcontractors and suppliers, providing great opportunities and experience. And the result is a quality product, delivered on time and on budget," said Richard Copeland, founder and chairman of the board of THOR Construction.

The $36 million new service center is designed to meet the future needs of families, community members and the school district and will bring together in one central location some 570 Minneapolis school staff members who were located in four separate buildings.

On a daily basis, the new service center will serve more than 1,000 students, staff, families and community members. It will house Adult Basic Education classes, a welcome center for families enrolling their children and testing facilities for kindergarten students and students receiving English Learner services.

Mortenson Development and Legacy Management and Development Corporation were the lead developers for the educational service center. Urbanworks Architecture and Urban Design Perspectives were the architectural design team, and Mortenson Construction and Thor Construction were general contractors for the project.