

South Dakota Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Newsletter

July 2024



Article 1-3
Strategies for Fleet Management
Within the Construction Industry

Upcoming Training..... 3
& Events

Upcoming Bid Lettings 4

Regional Lettings 4
Announcements 4

Invitations To Bid 5-6

Article 6-8
Integrating AI
for Small Business Growth

Welcome Newe DBEs..... 9

Did You Know? 9

Strategies for Fleet Management Within the Construction Industry

by Project Solutions Inc. Team



Running a successful trucking company requires a blend of strategic planning, effective management, and a keen understanding of the industry. From ensuring regulatory compliance to maintaining a reliable fleet, the challenges are numerous, but with the right approach, they can be managed effectively. Here are key considerations for operating a successful trucking company.

First and foremost, maintaining a well-kept fleet is crucial. The trucks are the backbone of any trucking business, and their reliability directly impacts the company's operations and profitability. Regular maintenance and timely repairs are essential to prevent breakdowns that can lead to delays and additional costs. Implementing a preventive maintenance schedule can help identify and address potential issues before they become major problems. This includes routine checks on engines, brakes, tires, and other critical components.

Hiring and retaining skilled drivers is another critical aspect. The quality of drivers not only affects the safety and efficiency of operations but also influences the company's reputation. It's important to conduct thorough background checks and provide ongoing training to ensure that drivers are knowledgeable about safety protocols, regulations, and the latest industry practices. Creating a positive work environment and offering competitive compensation and benefits can help attract and retain top talent.

Regulatory compliance is a significant factor in the trucking industry. Trucking companies must adhere to a variety of local, state, and federal regulations, including hours-of-service rules, weight limits, and safety standards. Non-compliance can result in hefty fines, legal issues, and reputational damage. Staying informed about the latest regulations and ensuring that both the management team and drivers understand and follow these rules is essential. Investing in compliance management systems can streamline this process and reduce the risk of violations.

Continued on Page 2

Efficient route planning and optimization are key to maximizing profitability. Fuel and labor costs constitute a significant portion of operating expenses, so finding the most efficient routes can lead to substantial savings. Utilizing route optimization software can help in planning the best routes, taking into account factors like traffic, road conditions, and delivery schedules. This not only reduces fuel consumption but also ensures timely deliveries, which is crucial for customer satisfaction.

Customer service is a critical component of a successful trucking business. Building strong relationships with clients and providing reliable, timely services can lead to repeat business and referrals. Clear communication is vital – keeping customers informed about the status of their shipments and promptly addressing any issues that arise can enhance trust and loyalty. Additionally, offering value-added services such as real-time tracking can differentiate a company from its competitors.

Managing finances effectively is essential for the sustainability of a trucking company. This involves meticulous budgeting, monitoring cash flow, and managing expenses. It's important to keep track of all costs, including fuel, maintenance, insurance, and labor, and find ways to reduce them without compromising on quality and safety. Implementing accounting software tailored to the trucking industry can simplify financial management and provide valuable insights into the company's financial health.

Leveraging technology can significantly improve efficiency and competitiveness. GPS tracking systems, for example, provide real-time data on vehicle locations, helping to improve route management and enhance security. Telematics systems can monitor various aspects of truck performance, such as fuel efficiency and driving behavior, enabling better maintenance and training. Additionally, investing in modern communication tools can facilitate better coordination between drivers, dispatchers, and customers.



Safety is a paramount concern in the trucking industry. Ensuring the safety of drivers, cargo, and other road users is not only a regulatory requirement but also critical for the company's reputation and financial stability. Implementing comprehensive safety programs that include regular training, safety audits, and incentive schemes for safe driving can reduce the risk of accidents. Moreover, equipping trucks with advanced safety features like collision avoidance systems and electronic logging devices (ELDs) can further enhance safety.

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the trucking industry. Reducing the environmental impact of operations can not only help in complying with regulations but also attract environmentally conscious customers. Adopting fuel-efficient trucks, optimizing routes to reduce mileage, and implementing eco-driving practices are some ways to reduce emissions. Additionally, exploring alternative fuels and technologies, such as electric or hybrid trucks, can contribute to a more sustainable operation.

Continued on Page 3

Building a strong brand and marketing the business effectively are crucial for growth. A professional image, a user-friendly website, and active engagement on social media can enhance visibility and attract new customers. Participating in industry events and networking with other professionals can also open up new business opportunities. It's important to highlight the company's strengths, such as reliability, safety, and customer service, in all marketing efforts.

Adaptability and continuous improvement are essential for long-term success. The trucking industry is constantly evolving, with changes in regulations, technology, and market conditions. Staying ahead of these changes requires a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Regularly reviewing and updating business practices, investing in training and development, and staying informed about industry trends can help a company remain competitive.

In conclusion, running a successful trucking company involves a multifaceted approach that includes maintaining a reliable fleet, hiring skilled drivers, ensuring regulatory compliance, optimizing routes, providing excellent customer service, managing finances, leveraging technology, prioritizing safety, adopting sustainable practices, and effective marketing. By focusing on these key areas, a trucking company can enhance its operations, build a strong reputation, and achieve long-term success in the competitive trucking industry.



Upcoming Training & Events

July 24 **SDDOT Alternative Contracting Methodologies**
Webinar
Wednesday, July 24, 2024
2:00 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

July 31 **Improve Fleet Performance with the Heavy Equipment Comparator**
Webinar
Wednesday, July 31, 2024
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

Aug. 8 **Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses**
Webinar
Thursday, August 8, 2024
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

Aug. 14 **Google Analytics for Small Businesses**
Webinar
Wednesday, August 14, 2024
Thursday, July 11, 2024
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

Upcoming Bid Lettings

For August 7, 2024

1. IM 1902(00)1, 090E-468 (PCN 09NX, I7DD); Meade, Pennington; Heat Straightening & Girder Repair; I190 - I90 & I190 Interchange over I90; I90 - Exit 32 (Sturgis)

Anticipated for August 21, 2024

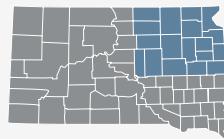
1. 07D3; Lawrence; Polymer Chip Seal, Joints, Approach Slab Repair; I90 E & W - Strs 1.7, 2 E of the WY State Line, Interch over Schenk Lane, 3, 1.3 W of the US85 Interch, EBL Off Ramp 0.3 W of the US85 Interch & 1.0 SE of the SD34 N Interch
2. 08PN; Union; Replace Joints, Bearings, Box Girder End Repair; I29 - Exit 9 (Jefferson) & Exit 15 (Elk Point) over I29
3. 08NQ; Lawrence; Structure Removal (254' Steel Gider); Structure E Boundary of Whitewood on the Whitewood Service Rd over Co Rd & the RCP&E RR (City Owned) SN 41-211- 100
4. 035F; Pennington; Replace Structure ((2) 394.5' Prestressed Girder Bridges), Approach Grading, Class G Asphalt Surfacing (2,800 tons); I90 E & W - Strs 3.3 E of the Wasta Interchange Over Bull Ck
5. 06FD; Jones, Lyman; Pipe Work (Ends & CIPP Lining); Various Locations Throughout the Winner Area
6. 097F; Clay, Union; Pavement Preservation; Various Locations in the Yankton Area
7. 09FL; Brookings, Hutchinson, Kingsbury, McCook; Centerline Rumble Stripes & Durable Pavement Markings; Mitchell Region

Announcements

Rapid City Regional Airport will be releasing two RFPs for the following upcoming procurement opportunities for ACDBEs:

1. Gift Shop expected to be released on August 2 with a due date of September 6.
2. ATM machines expected to be released on October 4 with a due date of November 1.

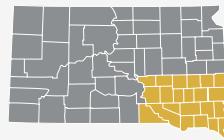
Regional Lettings



Aberdeen Region

7/31/2024

0009-168; i7kx; Codington, Grant, Hamlin & Roberts Counties; Bridge Deck Grinding on 8 structures over I-29 in NE South Dakota.



Mitchell Region

None.



Pierre Region

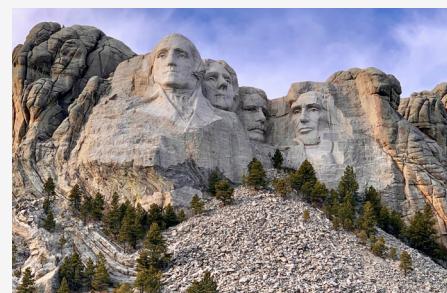
None.



Rapid City Region

None.

For listings please visit the SDDOT website's Regional Lettings here



Invitation to Bid

Invitation to Bid #1:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Technical Education(BTE)

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Technical Education(BTE) at https://www.sd.gov/cs?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=3150503d1bc306107e05ea85624bcb55 until **July 25, 2024 at 3:30pm MT** for the **Campus Wide, ARPA Storm Water Renovation Cat 5.6, Western Dakota Tech, Rapid City, South Dakota**, OSE# TCW23--01X/ARPA. NOTE: This bid is for new scope added to the project, additional culvert.

There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting on **July 16, 2024 at 1:00pm MT**. All bidders can meet at the west side parking lot of the Badlands Building. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. Campus contact is Bob Grimsrud, 605-718-2953, robert.grimsrud@wdt.edu. OSE contact is Steve Mezger, steve.mezger@state.sd.us 605-280-4526.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the office of FMG, 3700 Sturgis Road, Rapid City, SD 57702. A/E Contact: Jerry Foster, 605-342-4105, jfoster@fmgeengineering.com. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Bureau of Human Resources and Administration of the State of South Dakota. The BHRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

Office of the State Engineer

Published twice at the total approximate cost of _____.

Invitation to Bid #2:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents at https://www.sd.gov/cs?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=60a5826547570a9022dc4080236d4333 until **August 7, 2024 at 2:30 PM CT** for the **SCLB 6016, AES-FIELD STATION RENOVATIONS AND UPGRADES, South Dakota State University, Philip, South Dakota**, OSE# R0323—11X.

There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting on **July 31, 2024 at 11:00 AM MT**. All bidders can meet at **SDSU Cottonwood Field Station 23738 Fairview Rd, Philip, SD 57567**. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. Campus Contact is Luke Witte, 605-688-4136, luke.witte@sdstate.edu. OSE Contact is Brandon Carda, 605-295-1570, brandon.carda@state.sd.us.

Digital Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders from the office of Clark & Enersen, Inc., 1010 Lincoln Mall Suite 200 Lincoln, NE 68508 by emailing planroom@clarkenersen.com. Additional

Continued on Page 6

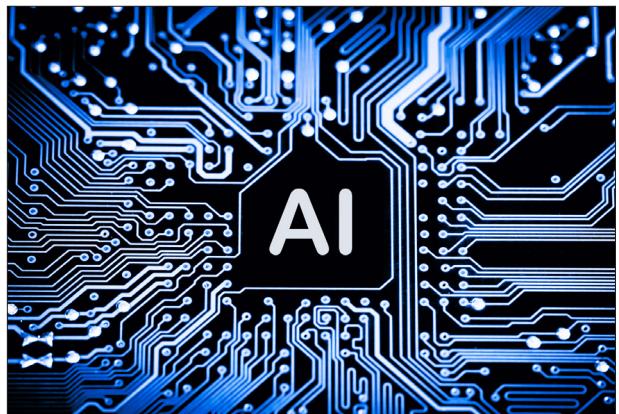
inquiries regarding obtaining Plans and Specifications should be directed to Melinda Lattig, 402-477-9291. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Board of Regents of the State of South Dakota. The BOR reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

Office of the State Engineer

Published twice at the total approximate cost of _____.

Integrating AI for Small Business Growth



In today's competitive landscape, small and disadvantaged businesses often find themselves facing significant hurdles when it comes to growth and sustainability. Limited resources, lack of access to cutting-edge technology, and intense competition from larger corporations can all pose formidable challenges. However, in the age of artificial intelligence (AI), there lies a tremendous opportunity for these businesses to level the playing field and thrive. By harnessing the power of AI, small and disadvantaged businesses can streamline operations, enhance decision-making processes, and unlock new avenues for innovation and growth.

At its core, AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, primarily through the utilization of algorithms and data. These algorithms enable machines to analyze vast amounts of data, recognize patterns, and make decisions with minimal human intervention.

Contrary to popular belief, AI is not solely the domain of tech giants. With advancements in technology and the proliferation of AI tools and platforms, businesses of all sizes can leverage AI to gain a competitive edge. From automating repetitive tasks to personalizing customer experiences, the applications of AI are diverse and far-reaching.

How AI Can Help Grow Your Business

Small and disadvantaged businesses face unique challenges that can impede their growth trajectory. These challenges include limited financial resources, a smaller customer base, and a lack of technological infrastructure. However, AI has the potential to address many of these challenges and empower these businesses to thrive. AI-powered automation can streamline repetitive tasks, allowing employees to focus on more value-added activities. Whether it's automating inventory management, scheduling appointments, or processing customer inquiries, AI can significantly enhance operational efficiency.

Continued on Page 7

Small businesses, especially in construction, often operate in data-rich environments but lack the means to extract actionable insights from this data. AI algorithms can analyze vast datasets in real-time, providing valuable insights into an organization's operations. Think of how you can use AI to analyze your job costing data to help understand a project's status or generate a Work in Progress (WIP) report. By making data-driven decisions, businesses can optimize their strategies and stay ahead of the competition.

Though learning how to navigate and effectively use AI technology will take time at first, implementing AI solutions doesn't necessarily require a significant upfront investment. Many AI tools and platforms are available on a subscription basis, allowing businesses to pay only for what they need. Moreover, by automating tasks and processes, businesses can reduce labor costs and optimize resource allocation. Imagine how much time and energy opens up if certain daily processes can be automated.

In today's contracting market, innovation is key to staying ahead of the competition. The construction industry is nothing like it was 10 to 15 years ago, so using the same processes shouldn't be either. By embracing AI, small businesses can differentiate themselves from their competitors and offer unique value propositions to their customers. Whether it's through predictive analytics or market analysis, small businesses can leverage AI to carve out a niche in the market.



How Your Business Can Implement AI

While the benefits of AI are clear, implementing AI solutions can seem daunting for businesses with limited technical expertise and resources. However, there are several practical steps that businesses can take to integrate AI into their operations effectively:

Start by identifying your pain points and seek the areas where AI can make the most significant impact to your day-to-day schedule. It may be collecting a series of data and presenting it in a way that's easier for you to understand and make decision on without too much time.

or effort. It may be able to help provide step-by-step instructions on how to execute a task you or your team is not completely familiar with. It may help you generate a piece of marketing to draw in more customers. Regardless of your current challenges, think creatively of areas where AI can deliver tangible benefits. Remember that implementing AI doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing endeavor. Start by experimenting with small-scale AI projects to gauge their effectiveness and feasibility. As you gain confidence and experience, you can gradually scale up your AI initiatives across different areas of your business.

While AI tools and platforms are becoming increasingly user-friendly, investing in training and education for your employees is still important. Provide opportunities for your team members to learn about AI technologies and how they can be applied to their respective roles. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, you can ensure that your workforce is equipped to harness the full potential of AI. There are ample training videos for construction or service-based companies available online.

Continued on Page 8

If you lack the internal expertise to implement AI solutions, consider partnering with AI experts or consulting firms. These professionals can provide valuable insights and guidance on how to integrate AI into your business effectively. From developing custom AI algorithms to optimizing existing processes, collaborating with AI experts can accelerate your journey towards AI adoption.

Some Examples of AI Integration

Project Planning and Management: AI-powered project management tools can assist in scheduling tasks, resource allocation, and budgeting. These tools can analyze historical project data to predict potential delays or cost overruns, allowing the company to mitigate risks proactively.

Predictive Maintenance: AI algorithms can analyze sensor data from construction equipment to predict when maintenance is needed. By detecting potential equipment failures early, the company can prevent costly downtime and improve operational efficiency.

Training/Certification Tracking: AI can not only generate a code or process for developing a training or certification tracker, but it can also perform the tracking for you, alerting you to when a team member needs to undergo a renewal training.

Supply Chain Optimization: AI can analyze historical data on material usage, supplier performance, and market trends to optimize the procurement process. By predicting demand and identifying the most cost-effective suppliers, the company can reduce costs and minimize delays due to material shortages.

AI holds tremendous promise for small businesses seeking to compete and thrive in this competitive industry. This is doubly true with bidding on government contracts, which tend to have much tighter margins. By embracing AI technologies and integrating them into your operations, you can enhance efficiency, drive innovation, and unlock new opportunities for growth. While the journey towards AI adoption may seem daunting, the benefits far outweigh the challenges. Refrain from becoming someone that refuses to see the potential and learn to capitalize on AI technology (it didn't pan out well for those who approach the internet with that mentality). With careful planning, strategic investment, and a commitment to continuous learning, you can harness the full potential of AI and pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future.



Welcome New DBEs!

Newly Certified Firms:

La Vie Home, Inc. dba La Vie Development, Inc.

Business management consulting and electric vehicle charging station vendor.

Contact: tlewter@laviedevelopment.com | (631) 655-3280
1840 Wisteria Circle, Bellport NY 11713

Hoxie Collective LLC

Strategic management and planning consultant.

Contact: choxie@hoxiecollective.com | (785) 840-5507
4335 Harrison St., Kansas City MO 64110

JMAC Group LLC

Environmental consultant, flagging, and safety services consultant.

Contact: rcraft@csinspector.com | (832)864-2396
8406 Mosley Rd. Suite A, Houston TX 77075

Asphalt Plus, Inc.

Building construction and remodeling, concrete, erosion control, site preparation, trucking.

Contact: office@asphaltplusinc.com | (406) 248-5609
425 Johnson Lane, Billings MT 59101

Rolling Blue Logistics LLC

Petroleum product supplier, office administrator,freight brokering, accountant services.

Contact: brooke@rollingbluelogisticsllc.com | (218) 770-9342
P.O. Box 103, Herman MN 56248

Did you know?

Construction Business Owner offers free webinar training courses on growing a construction-related business. Webinars are available on demand and offering information on a variety of topics such as financial and management operations, change order fundamentals, work in progress reports, job costing, and more. All of these courses are offered free and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

