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“BUILDING COMMUNITY WITHIN DIVERSITY”

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# MnDOT diversity recruiting program



MnCARRS (Mn/DOT Community Advisors on Recruitment & Retention Solutions), a new diversity recruiting project that is fast becoming a model for state agencies, celebrates its first year with MnDOT staff and community partners. (AAP staff photo by Tom LaVenture)

**By TOM LAVENTURE**  
**Managing Editor**

ST. PAUL (November 13, 2009) – Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Tom Sorel, in a meeting to celebrate the first year of a new diversity

recruitment effort, said it has succeeded and that the comprehensive project should expand and adapt to other agencies.

MnCARRS (Mn/DOT Community Advisors on Recruitment & Retention Solutions), headed by Emma Corrie,

a senior MnDOT Human Resources Recruitment Programs Manager, is a community partnership composed of MnDOT employees and community leaders representing minority communities, women, veterans, people with disabilities,

and the economically disadvantaged.

“We have achieved a great deal in a short span of one year,” said Corrie, “with special thanks to the time and efforts of our

**MnCARRS**  
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MnDOT Commissioner Tom Sorel speaks to staff and community partners of MnCARRS at their meeting Nov. 13, 2009.

MnCARRS partners.”  
MnCARRS has now recruited more than 60 technical assistant positions for Metro Maintenance. Of the 77 candidates hired, more than 22 of them were from MnCARRS.

“This is the first time we have had such a diverse applicant and hired pool for these jobs,” state Corrie.

Commissioner Sorel was present at the working meeting to acknowledge the MnCARRS team in its first year since convening in October 2008. It is a recruiting partnership tool between Mn/DOT and underrepresented communities, with short term goals of filling technician positions with qualified, diverse candidates. Long term goals are for an agency workforce and applicants that better reflect the community it serves.

Sorel said that MnCARRS members, in acting as recruiters within their own communities, mentoring candidates in working with MnDOT professionals and the application process, is consistent with the MnDOT vision to be a global leader with a world-class transportation system and with diversity as part of that goal.

“We need to maintain a workforce that reflects the community we serve,” said Sorel. “That is why you’re

with this program in the short time it has been in existence.”

The program is now a big part of recruitment and retention and the selection process, Sorel added. The challenges are to remain open and transparent, to continue talking as a group and a collaborative effort.

Sorel said the departments tell him that diversity, inclusion and opportunity are important, especially with the younger people. To be the employer of choice requires leadership to have a strategic direction, with transparency and public involvement with solutions.

He said that any project should contain a core measurement of whether or not it is helping and changing peoples lives.

“The fact that you’re changing lives is remarkable, and I thank you for that,” he added.

The other goal is for agencies to understand, reflect and respect the values of the community they work within, he said. Member meetings are held at Minneapolis Urban League, Hmong American Partnership, CLUES, Summit Academy OIC, American Indian OIC, Merrick Community Center and East Metro OIC.

They set up or attend career fairs and job

entry level positions but that the program should dedicate similar resources recruiting and training for professional opportunities.

Ashanti Payne, an MnDOT employee, provided an update on scholarships. There are grants for CDL licenses training and placement in the transportation industries. He said MnCARRS assists contractors and county transportation systems in training on equipment, trucks and plows. They have also partnered with tribal communities.

MnCARRS assisted Mn/DOT in recruiting applicants for the Commercial Drivers License training pilot program at Century College.

Corrie said they are proud of what they have achieved so far and understand they still have their work cut out for them next year. She said more than 30 direct referrals were hired or are in either CDL class or training as a technical assistant.

She said to increase that number more referrals are needed. She said the screening time can be reduced if potential candidates understand the basic requirements of their particular technical skill sets, safety, health and legal concerns with regard to driving skills and safety

**CHINA TALKS**  
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continue to adopt a strategic and long-term perspective, increase the dialogue exchanges and cooperation, and work together to build a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive China-U.S. relationship for the 21st century,” said Hu. “We also agreed to take concrete actions to steadily grow a partnership between the two countries to meet our common challenges in order to contribute to world peace, stability, and prosperity.”

The two spoke positively of the important role of the China-U.S. strategic and economic dialogues mechanism in enhancing the mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries. They pledged follow through on outcomes of the first round of talks held in July, and for a second round to be held in Beijing next summer.

Hu said the two countries need an equal footing for the foundation of recovery to become firmly established and to properly resolve frictions in a joint effort. He also opposes protectionism in all its manifestations as a barrier to progress.

Obama said the United States would respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China – and reaffirmed a strong commitment to a one-China policy.

“We did note that while we recognize that Tibet is part of the People’s Republic of China, the United States supports the early resumption of dialogue between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama to resolve any concerns and differences that the two sides may have,” said Obama. “We also applauded the steps that the People’s Republic

United States.

In a side press U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman, Obama has outstanding job through the of understanding explaining the and similar Confucian Jeffersonian

The term “China is an oxymoron,” Huntsman, who fluent Mandarin Obama’s agency on key issues and the bilateral relationship. He said it reflects China relationship has gone global. The key is in relationship on bilateral issues years.

“There was an issue that was added. “And I you that as on and someone this relationship as the on-site was very, very President.”

Senior Director National Security for Asian Affairs said the trip successful in and accomplished objectives they accomplish.

“It’s an first step in partnership between two countries together on global said Bader, nonproliferation were areas of progress.

Human rights concern of are critical to not assertive a tradeoff for of commerce. Bader added the years of being with president with China, to as direct a dis human rights seen by any visitor with the

here; as an important part of our vision, and I thank you for helping us reach that core value.”

Sorel credited Corrie and the team with its success through strong community contacts and said he is intrigued that the MnCARRS program is now being adapted to agencies. He said a source of its strength is that the direction is not all coming from one place, and that it is catching on as a vital part of the workplace and the community.

MnCARRS has provided a concept model that has integrated successfully in other facets of the daily business of MnDOT. He said the program has shown that the way to move similar projects forward is with the use of community liaisons and an advisory committee.

“We know that we couldn’t do these thing without you,” he said to the team members. “Great things have happened

information events, help with mock interview sessions and other support in the application process. Mn/DOT acquired DHS and Ramsey County contracts to assist MFIP recipients to gain employment across the state. The American Indian Family center is another participant in the Ramsey county partnership and is represented on the MnCARRS team.

“We need to have perspective,” Sorel added. “We are looking at how to expand this model to other aspects of business.”

What began as an alternative method to improve diversity recruiting may well become incorporated into agency best practices, according to some members, because of the comprehensive improvement to outcomes based on better use of training resources, funding and expertise.

Another participant noted that the program has worked well with

issues.

There were various alternative selection processes mentioned for people with physical or cognitive disabilities. They were well received but Corrie cautioned that union standards apply and they would need to play a role in designing such a process.

MnCARRS is assisting Mn/DOT HR with integrating diversity into the ‘Competency based interview training for Mn/DOT supervisors’.

Another participant noted that not all technical assistant training went as well as planned, and that this transition to a second year should incorporate the learning process. That would include consideration for differences of culture as part of the evaluations process.

“We’ve been in the system a little bit and know how the system works,” said Corrie replied. ●