

NEWS | 08/09/2011

E.M. Harris Receives MOKAN GC Award

E.M. Harris Construction Company received the General Contractor of the Year award at MOKAN's 36th annual awards dinner held July 29 at the Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel.

MOKAN is a non-profit organization formed in 1974 to advocate the inclusion of minority-owned business enterprises (MBE) and women-owned business enterprises (WBE) on construction projects in the St. Louis area.

MOKAN's General Contractor of the Year award is presented to a majority firm in the construction industry for its commitment to diversity in the workplace and inclusion of MBE/WBE contractors.

E.M. Harris Construction founder and CEO, Mike Harris, received the award on behalf of the company. "Inclusion of minorities and women shouldn't even be an issue," said Harris. "It should happen naturally. It's what's fair, and it's how we've always done business."

Bryant Scaife, Sr., owner of MBE contracting company B.E. Scaife Plumbing Company, attended the awards dinner and praised Harris as instrumental in helping minority contractors.

"Mike Harris was a mentor to me when I was new to the business ten years ago," said Scaife. "He treated me with respect and helped guide me along."

The company received the award due, in part, to the high number of MBE contractors it hires for its projects. The City of St. Louis requires at least 25 percent MBE participation on all construction projects within the city limits. E.M. Harris Construction has doubled those percentages on several of its recent projects in the city.

On its Dick Gregory project, comprising the renovation of 17 dilapidated historic structures in the Ville neighborhood into 40 apartment units, the company awarded 66 percent of contracts to MBE contractors.

"We want local residents to work on projects in these distressed neighborhoods, because jobs change lives," said Harris. "By putting residents to work, it pays bills and helps stimulate the local economy."

Established in 1989, E.M. Harris Construction is a full-service general contracting and construction management firm. The company has completed over 150 commercial and residential projects, including new construction, historic renovation and moderate rehabilitation.



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