

Business Engagement and Compliance

August nonresidential construction spending inches up

National nonresidential construction spending increased 0.1% in August 2024, according to an Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) analysis of data published by the U.S. Census Bureau. On a seasonally adjusted annualized basis, nonresidential spending totaled \$1.22 trillion.

Spending was up on a monthly basis in 10 of the 16 nonresidential subcategories. Private nonresidential spending decreased 0.1%, while public nonresidential construction spending was up 0.3% in August 2024.

“Nonresidential construction spending inched higher in August, and that’s almost entirely due to ongoing infrastructure investments,” said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. “Public spending accounted for all of the nonresidential segment’s monthly increase and has risen nearly 8% over the past year, significantly outpacing privately financed nonresidential construction activity. As a result of ongoing weakness in certain private subsegments, ABC’s [Construction Backlog Indicator](#) has fallen by a full month over the past year. While falling interest rates will eventually serve as a tailwind for the industry, it may be several quarters before privately financed segments see any substantial relief.” ([Source](#))



NEWLY CERTIFIED DBE FIRMS

- [Crowley Engineering LLC](#)
- [Lead at Any Level LLC](#)
- [Osman Engineering PLLC](#)
- [Paragon Diversity Group Inc.](#)
- [MAS COMM Inc.](#)
- [Sensis Inc.](#)
- [Turf and Ivy Solutions](#)
- [VM Global Solutions LLC](#)



**Prep, poise and precision:
A small business owner's
Q&A survival guide**



**DBE Spotlight: R&B
HYDROBLASTING LLC**



**RLB releases third quarter cost
report and Crane Index**



**2024 ADOT DBE & Small Business
Conference recap**

- ▶ **EVENTS**
- ▶ **DBE AVAILABILITY STUDY**
- ▶ **OPPORTUNITIES**

Communication skills that hit the mark – Part 4

Prep, poise and precision: A small business owner's Q&A survival guide

Q&A sessions during interviews or project conversations are common in the design and construction industry. These discussions provide an invaluable opportunity to showcase your expertise. However, answering questions on the spot—especially when you do not know what might be asked—can be overwhelming. Adopting a few strategic techniques will allow you to easily navigate any Q&A session—even when the questions catch you by surprise.

Here is how to effectively prepare and answer with poise when it matters most.

1. Know your client and project

Start by gathering as much information as possible about the client or audience you will be addressing. Understand their goals, concerns and project scope so you can tailor your answers to suit their needs. If your audience is from the public sector, familiarize yourself with relevant policies and regulations that might come up. For private sector clients, investigate their past projects and company values. This foundational knowledge will allow you to answer questions more effectively and show you are well-prepared.

2. Use PREP and STAR for clear, confident responses

When put on the spot, structured response methods can help you stay organized and provide clear, impactful answers. Two effective frameworks are PREP and STAR:

- **PREP (Point, Reason, Example, Point)** is perfect for delivering concise responses. For example, if asked, “Why do you prioritize sustainable materials?” you could answer:
 - o **Point:** “We prioritize sustainable materials because they align with our commitment to environmental responsibility.”
 - o **Reason:** “Sustainable materials reduce environmental impact, contribute to energy efficiency and meet growing client demands for eco-friendly solutions.”
 - o **Example:** “In a recent project, we used reclaimed wood and recycled steel, enhancing the building’s energy performance and minimizing waste.”
 - o **Point:** “Overall, using sustainable materials is an essential part of our design philosophy and meets both environmental and client objectives.”
- **STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result)** is best for storytelling. Use it to describe how you addressed specific challenges. For example:
 - o **Situation:** “In a recent project, we faced a delay due to unforeseen weather conditions.”
 - o **Task:** “My task was to keep the project on track and minimize the timeline impact.”
 - o **Action:** “I coordinated with the team to reallocate resources, prioritized indoor tasks and brought in extra crew members to make up for lost time.”
 - o **Result:** “We made up the lost days and completed the project on schedule, maintaining client satisfaction and staying within budget.”

Whether you choose PREP for quick responses or STAR for detailed examples, these methods will help you provide structured, confident answers that make a positive impression.

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Communication skills that hit the mark – Part 4

Prep, poise and precision: A small business owner's Q&A survival guide (cont'd)

3. Practice poise under pressure

Responding to questions on the fly requires a calm, focused mindset. Here are a few techniques to help you stay composed in high-pressure situations:

- **Take a moment before you answer:** When a question is posed, pause for a breath before responding. This short break helps you gather your thoughts, demonstrating to your client that you are contemplating your answer.
- **Rephrase the question:** Rephrasing buys you a moment to think and ensures you understand the question correctly. For instance, if asked, "How would you manage unexpected delays?" you could respond with, "Managing unexpected delays requires a flexible approach..." This technique also helps clarify the question if it is vague. (This is a great example of starting with the Point we discussed in PREP.)
- **Focus on key points:** Avoid over-explaining. When answering questions about complex topics, such as sustainability, efficiency and cost, stick to two or three key points. This keeps your response clear and focused.
- **Practice answering on camera:** Record yourself responding to potential questions. Watching the playback allows you to catch nervous habits and adjust accordingly. It also helps you improve your overall presentation and presence.
- **Use visualization techniques:** Before your session, visualize yourself confidently answering questions. Picture yourself maintaining eye contact and handling tough questions smoothly. Visualization can help reduce anxiety and mentally prepare you for a successful question and answer.

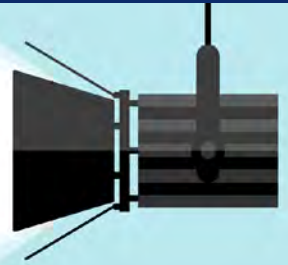
Three key takeaways for small business owners:

1. **Do your homework:** Before any interview or event, invest time in researching your client and project. This understanding will allow you to answer questions more effectively and demonstrate that you are well-prepared.
2. **Use PREP and STAR:** Try the PREP method to structure your thoughts concisely for quick responses. For detailed examples, use STAR to tell a compelling story and provide clarity.
3. **Practice composure techniques:** Whether you take a moment to breathe, rephrase questions or record yourself, practicing these techniques will help you stay calm and deliver confident, effective answers.

In summary, while you cannot predict every question, you can prepare to respond confidently and accurately. With the proper preparation and a calm approach, you will be able to navigate any Q&A session with ease and strengthen your client relationships.



DBE SPOTLIGHT



R&B HYDROBLASTING LLC

rbhydroblasting.com | (520) 580-2783

Certifications:

DBE/SBE/C7/

Lead Renovator

COMPANY PROJECTS:

Project #1

Conducted a sandblasting operation to remove epoxy coating from a wooden horse freight wagon with rust and paint on the undercarriage. The project took ten days to complete. R&B Hydroblasting provided:

- A project cost estimate.
- Determined the appropriate removal process.
- Conducted the abrasive blasting operation.

Project #2

Conducted a sandblasting operation to remove epoxy coating from 1,300-square-foot concrete surface for a community recreation area basketball court. Operation was completed in seven days. R&B Hydroblasting provided:

- A project cost and duration estimate.
- Provided a safety plan and safety perimeter to protect the residents and work area.
- Determined the appropriate removal process.
- Ensured containment of spent media.
- Conducted abrasive blast operation and a concrete surface profile of four to five as requested by painting contractor.

Project #3

Conducted a sandblasting operation to remove 1,400 square feet of graffiti from a restaurant brick wall and cinder block property wall. Operation was completed in two days. R&B Hydroblasting provided:

- A project cost estimate.
- Temporary protection to contain spent abrasive media to customers property.
- Ensured safe operation of sandblasting and safety of the public.



SERVICES OFFERED:

- Abrasive blasting surface preparation.
- Graffiti removal.
- Residential and commercial painting.
- Power washing.

MEET THE LEADERS:

ANTHONY RICHARDSON

CEO

- 10 years in facility maintenance and minor repair.
- Four years in supervising inmate labor painting and minor repairs.
- Four years as regional facility infrastructure manager.
- Five years as part-time sandblaster for Fischer Autobody.

REINA RICHARDSON

President

- 25 years of customer service in the healthcare industry.

RLB releases third quarter cost report and Crane Index

Construction costs in Phoenix continued to increase in the third quarter, but they rose less on a year-over-year basis than any of the other cities tracked in the newly released “[North America Quarterly Construction Cost Report](#)” from Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB).

RLB’s comparative cost index shows Phoenix with an annual percent change of 3.88% over the year from July 2023 to July 2024. The next closest city was Denver at 4.01%. Chicago saw the largest percent change at 6.73%, followed by Boston at 5.87%.

In his introduction to the report, RLB North America President Paul Brussow writes U.S. construction cost inflation is continuing to decline. “The quarterly 1.07% is the lowest in the last three years, and the year-over-year change of 4.91% is the lowest level recorded in more than three years.”

Brussow praised the Federal Reserve’s recent interest rate cut, noting it “is essential to our industry. It signals an effort to avert further cooling of the labor market, and new construction will be in demand. As a result, the current soft readings for construction labor will likely reverse in the upcoming quarters, indicating that the underlying lack of skilled labor will probably continue.”

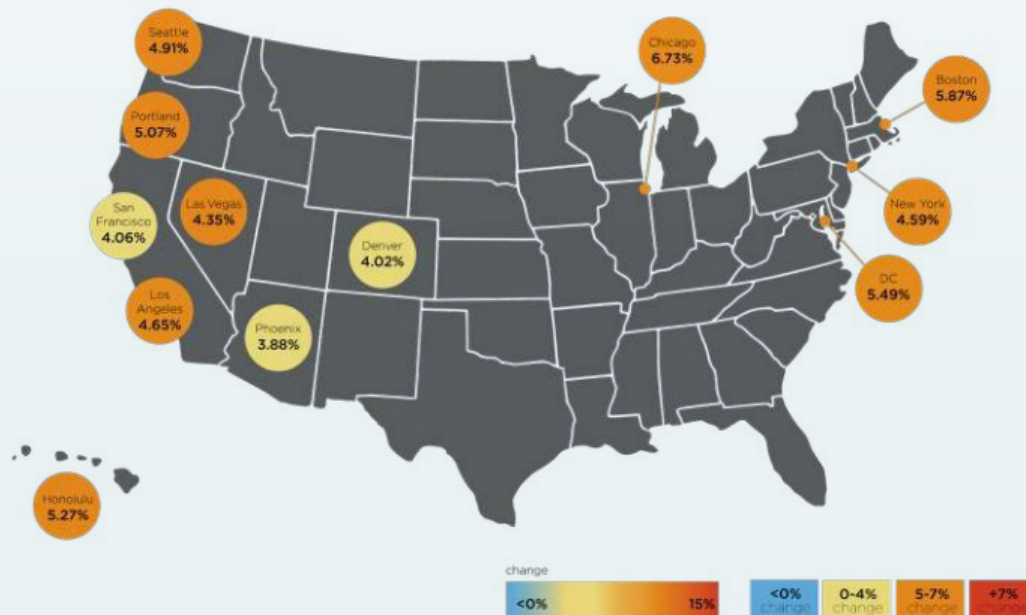
He cautions, however, “There have (been) ongoing signs of economic slowdown this year, including a continuing softness in billings at architecture firms—a difficult lending environment for construction projects—and persistent weakness in commercial property values. On the other hand, manufacturing-related construction continues to be an exception and has seen the fastest growth in construction spending, like massive investments in chip manufacturing facilities and other industrial projects.”

Phoenix adds a crane

Phoenix also added one crane to the latest [RLB Crane Index](#). According to the report, “Phoenix has seen a net increase of one crane since the last count up to eight, with several projects concluding and new ones emerging. A notable addition is the expansion of the Phoenix Theatre Company, part of their 20-year, \$70 million plan. The majority of cranes continue to serve mixed-use residential high-rises, with an additional crane dedicated to a new parking garage in the busy downtown area, addressing urban density challenges.”

In total, the crane count remains steady across North America. Las Vegas added one crane. Increases were also seen in Honolulu, Chicago, Toronto, Calgary, and Washington, D.C. Los Angeles, Denver and New York City were steady. Decreases were reported in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and Boston.

COMPARATIVE COST INDEX



2024 ADOT DBE & Small Business Conference recap

The 2024 ADOT DBE & Small Business Conference, held under the inspiring theme “THINK BIG - Bridging Inclusive Growth,” proved to be a remarkable success. With over 260 registered attendees, the conference offered valuable insights and networking opportunities. Participants engaged in four informative breakout sessions covering critical topics, from legal challenges facing small businesses to strategies for securing capital. A highlight was the panel discussion where a DBE interviewed three Prime panelists, shedding light on how small businesses can thrive in partnerships with primes.

Another standout session featured an eye-opening Electric Vehicle panel with speakers from ADOT, SRP, the Arizona Commerce Authority, and Lucid Motors, emphasizing the evolving landscape of transportation. Attendees took advantage of over 135 speed appointments with primes, project owners, and procurement support organizations, fostering meaningful connections. The excitement was palpable as attendees explored a new Lucid Air electric vehicle model, further underscoring the conference’s innovative spirit.

A special mixer for Business Development Program alumni brought together industry leaders, facilitating valuable discussions and mentorship opportunities. Participants also had the chance to visit with over 30 exhibitors, expanding their business horizons.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the annual award winners: GJH Motors LLC, recognized as the DBE Trailblazer; Combs Construction Company Inc., honored as the Prime Construction Champion; and Stanley Consultants, named Prime Consultant Champion. Their achievements exemplify the spirit of excellence in our community.

As we celebrate another successful conference, we extend our gratitude to all our sponsors, community partners, presenters, DBEs, and other small businesses whose support made this event possible. Here’s to continued growth and collaboration in the future!



DBE Certification Exhibit



ADOT Business Development Program 2024 Graduates



Electric Vehicle and Arizona Panel



Networking at the Conference

Business Engagement and Compliance

 ADOT/BECO  Other Associations

****ATTENTION TO ALL FIRMS****

Need help preparing DBE affidavits?
Please see our tutorial video below:

[Preparing DBE Affidavits](#)



NOVEMBER

1 **ASA AZ: Build Her Up and ARCA: Protect and Grow Your Financial House**
2 - 4 p.m.
Location: Mustang Library
10101 N. 90th St., Scottsdale

2 **Valley Partnership: Annual Community Project Event Day**
7:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Location: Sojourner Center
2330 E. Fillmore St., Phoenix

6 **ASBA: Torch Award for Ethics**
6 p.m.
Location: Arizona Biltmore | Arizona Biltmore Ballroom
2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix

7 **AZ Water Association: Pints for People**
4 p.m.
Location: Pedal Haus Phoenix
214 E. Roosevelt St., Phoenix

7 **ABA Member Mixer Hosted by The Weitz Company**
4 - 6 p.m.
Location: The Weitz Company
2111 E. Highland Ave., Ste. 400, Phoenix

8 **ABA: Fifth Annual ABA Southern AZ Chairmans Golf Tournament**
6:30 a.m.
Location: El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Club
10555 N. La Canada Dr., Oro Valley

15 **Valley Partnership: November Friday Morning Breakfast**
7:30 - 9 a.m.
Location: Phoenix Country Club
2901 N. Seventh St., Phoenix

18/19 **AICCAZ: Business Conference**
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Location: Casino Del Sol
5655 W. Valencia Road, Tucson

ADOT PRESENTS

Revised DBE goal for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contracts as part of its 2022 DBE Availability Study.

YOU'RE INVITED!

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

Tuesday Oct. 29

1 - 1:45 p.m. MST

 [Register Here!](#)

Thursday Oct. 31

9 - 9:45 a.m. MST

 [Register Here!](#)

For more information about **ADOTs 2022 DBE Availability Study** and proposed DBE goals for each USDOT agency (FHWA, FTA, FAA)

Visit

<https://azdot.gov/business/business-engagement-and-compliance/2022-dbe-availability-study>

ARIZONA
— DEPARTMENT OF —
TRANSPORTATION

About the study

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) as well as agencies receiving funds through ADOT, award contracts for transportation projects throughout the state. As a requirement of receiving U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) funds for these design, construction, public transportation and other contracts, ADOT must operate the Federal Disadvantaged Enterprise (DBE) Program. A requirement of the DBE is to set three-year overall goals for DBE participation in USDOT-funded contracts.

Based on ongoing discussions between ADOT and the FAA's DBE/ACDBE Program Compliance Team, ADOT is proposing a revised FAA DBE Goal for the federal fiscal year (FY) 2025 - 2027 of 4.61%.

Please join us on Tuesday, October 29th, from 1:00 to 1:45 pm, or Thursday, October 31st, from 9:00 to 9:45 am. to learn more about the revision to ADOT's proposed FAA DBE goal for fiscal years 2025 to 2027.

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other nondiscrimination laws and authorities, ADOT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. People who require a reasonable accommodation based on language or disability should contact Blanca Monter at ADOTAvailabilityStudy2022@keenindependent.com. Requests should be made as early as possible to ensure the State has an opportunity to address the accommodation.

De acuerdo con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Ley de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA) en inglés) y otras leyes y reglamentos contra la discriminación, el Departamento de Transporte de Arizona (ADOT) no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad o discapacidad. Las personas que requieren asistencia (dentro de lo razonable) ya sea por idioma o discapacidad debe comunicarse con Blanca Monter en

ADOTAvailabilityStudy2022@keenindependent.com. Las solicitudes deben hacerse lo más pronto posible para asegurar que el Estado tenga la oportunidad de hacer los arreglos necesarios.



Featured Federal-Aid Projects

CURRENT OPEN SOLICITATIONS

Due Date	Project Valuation	DBE Goal	Solicitation / Project Number	Type	Project Owner and Description	Contact
11/1/24 11:00 a.m. MST	\$4.95 million	9.98%	FLA-0-(221)T; T024701C	IFB	ADOT - Fourth St. to Cedar Ave. to Lockett Road, Flagstaff. The work consists of constructing a roundabout at the intersection including drainage improvements, signing and marking, roadway lighting, utility adjustments and other related work.	Kirstin Huston, Group Manager of Contracts & Specifications, at Khuston@azdot.gov .
11/1/24 11:00 a.m. MST	\$5.8 million	1.17%	040-C-(228)T; F028101C	IFB	ADOT - I-40 Variable Speed Limit System, Ash Fork to Flagstaff Hwy (I-40) from Transwestern Road to the I-17. The work consists of the installation of Variable Speed Limit Signs, Closed Circuit Television Cameras, fiber optic cable in conduit, Road Surface State Sensors, loop detector stations and related work.	Kirstin Huston, Group Manager of Contracts & Specifications, at Khuston@azdot.gov .
11/1/24 11:00 a.m. MST	\$5.3 million	7.59%	MM0-0-(223)T; T027201C	IFB	ADOT - System Enhancement, from Northern Ave to Stockton Hill Road, Mohave County REBID. The work consists of constructing concrete sidewalks and driveways, replacing pavement markings, installing a new traffic signal video detection camera and other related work.	Kirstin Huston, Group Manager of Contracts & Specifications, at Khuston@azdot.gov .
11/15/24 11:00 a.m. MST	\$42 million	7.15%	040-A-(385)T; F058501C	IFB	ADOT - Pavement Rehabilitation, Topock to Kingman Highway (I-40) from Holy Moses Wash to Rattlesnake. The work consists of milling the existing asphaltic concrete pavement and replacing it with new asphaltic concrete, replacing guardrail and guardrail end terminals, repairing bridge deck, replacing pavement marking, signing, seeding and other miscellaneous work.	Kirstin Huston, Group Manager of Contracts & Specifications, at Khuston@azdot.gov .

External Links:

- [ADOT Current Advertisements](#)
- [ADOT Engineering Advertisements](#)
- [ADOT Public-Private Partnership Initiatives](#)
- [ADOT Advertised Alternative Delivery Projects](#)
- [Bidding Opportunities Around the State](#)

DBE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

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