

District 4 Design Newsletter

September 2013

It is not as easy as it seems.....

By: May Sanchez

I joined the Design/Utilities Team the first week in June of this year, as the "District Utility Coordinator." With a background of Construction and Maintenance, I knew of the Utility world but unaware of the role it plays in Design.

From the early stages of Utility involvement at a project's Kick-Off meeting, to Cost Estimate billing, initiating or amending an Agreement, encumbering funds, issuing a Utility Certification, payment on a final invoice to issuing a Permit (if applicable), the most valued task to me, has been encumbering funds.

I had been unaware of the complexities of the encumbrance process. A process which starts when we receive reimbursable information from the Project Manager (PM) or at a 'Kick-Off Meeting'. Once we receive the reimbursable information, we work with the Legal Department to verify if it is reimbursable. If approved, we work with the Utility Agency, Design, Legal, and Program Management to formalize the Reimbursable Agreement, which includes the Utility Relocation Cost Estimate, and the Scope of Work. All the pertinent project information is then entered in the 'FACTS' system, where we receive a contract number to finalize the Agreement process.

We verify the present funds in the 'Financial Management System' (FM). If additional funds or phases are needed, we send a request to the PM thru the 'Work Program Change Request'. Once approved by the PM and 'Work Program' the monies are added and authorized in FM.

Through the Contract Funds Management System (CFM), the Financial Project Number and the current fiscal year are verified and the encumbrance for the fund is made. At this point or sometime after this point, payment information is made via the FACTS system. This payment could be for a partial payment or a Final. If payment was for a partial payment, the same process is repeated at final invoice.

This is just one of the processes our Utility Office goes through. There are many more facets of our Unit, such as the Utility Certification process, Permit reviews, Roll Forward, Utility Subordinations, Consultant Contracts and Task Work Orders, Final Invoicing, just to name a few.

It may not be as easy as it seems, but thanks to the continued cooperation of the PMs and Consultants, before and after, the process is a smooth one (sometimes even painless), and for that we thank you!

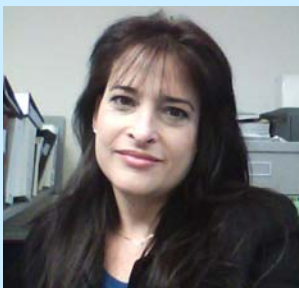
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New/Relocated Employee Introductions



Benjamin Restrepo - Traffic Design

I was born in Jacksonville Florida but relocated to Rincon P.R. when I was five years old. At the age of 19, I attended the University of Connecticut to pursue a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering (graduated from UCONN on December 2012). At UCONN I was very involved on campus and worked as an event coordinator for students on Friday and Saturday nights, as well as, a research assistant in the Engineering Department's concrete labs. A few of my hobbies are playing basketball and tennis; I also enjoy brewing my own ales at home. I have a twin brother currently attending the University of Georgia. My father is Colombian and my mother is a native Floridian, I consider myself a very cultured person because of my upbringing. I have traveled to several places in Europe and South America. I am a huge Miami HEAT fan, so if anyone wants to go see a HEAT game let me know and I'll tag along.



May Sanchez - Utilities

Hello Design. My name is May Sanchez. I live in Miami with my 2 kids, my son is a college grad and my daughter is just entering high school. I started my FDOT career in the District Six Construction Office and as I obtained additional experience I moved up the ladder to eventually audit construction plans and their final payments as an Engineer 1 in their Final Estimates office. I finally realized all of the great projects are in District Four so in 2008 I transferred to the Palm Beach Operations Office continuing my Final Estimates efforts. In 2010 I transferred to the District Maintenance Office where I worked as a Plans Reviewer and the District's ADA Coordinator. I enjoy cooking, baking, and spending time with my kids (while they are still willing). I have made many friends at FDOT throughout the years and still maintain a friendship and spend time with them as well. I plan to continue my studies at FIU and to improve myself both on a personal and educational level.



Alain Jimenez - Section 3

Alain Jimenez was born in La Habana, Cuba and came to the United States in 1999 with his parents. One of his biggest dreams always was to become an Engineer, and after studying English, he went to Miami Dade College where he graduated with honors. Once he obtained his A.A, he transferred to Florida International University pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering. He graduated from FIU in the summer of 2013 with specialization in Transportation Engineering. Alain has been working in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) as an Intern since August 2011. He started in Traffic Operations and spent more than a year under supervision doing signing and pavement marking work order improvements among some other assignments such as crash data reports and collision diagrams. In January 2013, he was transferred to Design (Section 1) where he was involved in a Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) project until he graduated. Alain is planning on continuing his education by pursuing a Masters Degree in Transportation Engineering and obtaining his Professional Engineering License. Right now, he is concentrated in his current job as a Roadway Design at FDOT.

New/Relocated Employee Introductions cont.

**Armando Aguiar - Section 3**

Before coming to work for FDOT, Armando graduated from Florida International University in August 2012. His education includes a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with specialization in Structural Engineering. Having served in the military he also has training as a US Army Infantry Officer School Graduate, Reserve Officer Training Corps Graduate, US Army Ordnance Corps School Graduate, and many other military schools and trainings. Armando's work experiences are very diverse having worked in the design of elevator cabs and entrances for companies, such as, Otis Elevator, Kone Elevator and Minnesota Elevator, in addition he worked for Optimal Forex Trading (a Financial Trading Company) as Floor Manager and Trading Administrator. In his military service he served as an enlisted soldier for the US Army for six years and is currently an Infantry Commissioned Officer in the Florida Army National Guard. Armando was born in Villa Clara, Cuba and he came to the beautiful country of the United States in 2000 along with his mother and brother. Today he is focused on his work at FDOT and plans on continuing his professional education by studying for a Masters Degree and obtaining his Professional Engineering License.

**Alexander Estrada - Section 1**

I was born in Cuba and come from a family of Engineers. Both of my parents are Mechanical Engineers. I graduated from FIU with a BSCE in December 2012 where I learned many engineering concepts. During my life I had the opportunity to be exposed to different cultures. As a child I learned Spanish in Cuba, but later on when I started school I had to learn Russian because my family moved there. Afterward when I came to Florida, English became my third language. With this life experience I have learned to embrace other cultures and always learn more from others. Some of the things that I also enjoy are computers, electronic gadgets, and sports. I like developing my computer skills which includes hardware as well as software. I also enjoy a good game of football and baseball. I am very excited to be joining the diverse Design team at Florida Department of Transportation D4 and learn from the best Engineers. I look forward to expand my knowledge and bring my skills to the department.

**Tonya Estwick - Section 1**

Tonya is originally from St. Lucia but grew up in Barbados where she got her start as an Engineering Intern and later, Manager of Small Works for a prominent construction company on the island. She moved to Florida to obtain her Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and graduated in 2011 from Florida International University. While in school, she worked as a CAD Technician and a Construction Estimator. She is an avid reader, enjoys travelling and growing orchids.

**Joe Donegan - Structures**

Joseph (Joe) Donegan is a native Floridian, born and raised in the Orlando area. He attended the University of Florida where he received a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering and an M.E. degree in Civil Engineering (Structures). He began his work experience as an intern in Transportation Planning at the City of Gainesville before moving to South Florida for the FDOT PE Trainee program in November of 2011. After completing the program's rotations, Joe accepted a permanent position with the Structures Design section. His hobbies include spending time with family and friends, playing a variety of sports, and anything on the water.

New/Relocated Employee Introductions cont.

**Yenny Soca - Section 3**

Yenny graduated from Florida Atlantic University Civil Engineering program in May, 2013. Before attending Florida Atlantic University he attended Palm Beach State College finishing with an Associates Degree in Building Construction Technologies. Shortly after arriving in Florida in 2002, Yenny started to work in the commercial and residential sector of the construction field. For the next 11 years he continued working in construction for different companies attaining different positions ascending from construction laborer to foreman. Ultimately, after becoming a Florida Certified General Contractor, he led Yenso Enterprises, Inc. in the completion of several small construction projects focusing primarily in residential remodeling and additions. Since his first year at FAU he started to develop a strong interest in working on large civil engineering projects for FDOT, especially on bridges and roads. During his senior year he had the opportunity to design a variety of civil engineering projects including shallow and deep foundations, retaining walls, reinforced concrete structures, steel framed structures, drainage systems, water and wastewater process, etc. Among Yenny's interests are playing sports and exercising, spending time with his family and friends, and reading. Currently, Yenny is focused on becoming a professional engineer and getting involved in the most amazing and challenging civil engineering projects, where ingenuity and hard work are required from the engineers on a daily basis. In addition to having fulfilling work where his engineering knowledge and expertise can grow without boundaries, his personal expectations also include to have a supportive and beautiful family, to be able to excel as a father, and to have a healthy lifestyle.

**Ron Wallace - Section 5 (Section Leader)**

Ron is a registered Professional Engineer and has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Central Florida. Ron has more than 19 years of experience in design of minor, major and complex highway projects. He started his career in the private sector with a consultant firm in Orlando, before joining the Department as a project manager in Section 5 Consultant Management in January 2005. He later took a position in District Maintenance, as the District Maintenance Contracts Administrator. Ron missed design too much so he returned back and has enjoyed working in Consultant Management on several challenging projects. On personal note, Ron is married and has two daughters one age 7 and the other recently born in October. Ron is a huge Dolphin and Heat fan and enjoys playing drums with the band "Freeway" and playing amateur Jai Alai.