

Rick Rivera got it when he was young Now he's giving back

Many young boys like to pretend that they're working in construction.

But at the age of 8, Rick Rivera was actually helping his father rehab and rent two- and three-flat apartment buildings in the Humboldt Park neighborhood.

"My jobs were putting in windows and tearing down walls," he says.



Rick Rivera

Today, the 34-year-old president and co-owner of R & G Engineering, LLC, is still tearing down walls – proving that a young Hispanic entrepreneur can succeed in construction while opening windows

of opportunity for younger generations of Hispanic engineers.

Rick's early construction experience led to an interest in civil engineering, which he studied at the University of Illinois-Urbana. After graduating in 1998, he worked as a consultant at other engineering firms before launching R & G Engineering in 2005 with Dan Griffin, his former boss at Cotter Consulting, Inc.

Rick has found success in the highly competitive professional services sector with help from the entrepreneurship program at the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The chamber provided him the opportunity to network, establish

contacts and become a certified minority contractor in order to secure business with several government agencies.

Since 2007, R & G Engineering has worked on several projects for the Illinois Tollway, including rebuild and widen projects on the Tri-State Tollway (I-94/I-294/I-80) and Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88).

The company was selected as a prime consultant for the first time this past February to provide construction inspection, supervision and material testing at selected locations on the Tollway System for various projects.

R & G Engineering is looking forward to continued growth and expansion. The company currently has a staff of 10 and intends to increase hiring as it pursues opportunities in other states and at the federal level.

Rick's path as a young minority business owner has not been without challenges. As a young entrepreneur, he has experienced resistance from other contractors reluctant to take direction from him. The occasional comment about his minority status or age has not dissuaded him.

"I just let them know that they had better get used to it because I'm not going away," he says.

Rick is heavily involved with mentoring and supporting students interested in the civil engineering fields through the Society of Hispanic

Diversity Events Calendar

November 17 – 8:30 to 11 a.m.

Wm. Charles Construction Co.'s 4th Annual Subcontractor Networking Forum
Giovanni's Restaurant and Convention Center in Rockford

December 1 – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

13th Annual Transportation Symposium & Business Exchange
Chicago Hilton & Towers

The new **Professional Services Bulletin** is now available on the Tollway Web site, www.illinoistollway.com, on the Bids page of the Doing Business section.

Professional Engineers and Junior Achievement.

He's working closely with four students from Aurora who are enrolled in the engineering program at his alma mater.

"I'm trying to grow some civil engineers," he says. "There aren't enough Hispanic civil engineers out there."

As the youngest of three children and the first in his family to graduate from college, Rick recognizes the importance of being a role model. He recently took his niece on a tour of the University of Illinois campus to give her a feel of what university life would feel like.

"She is in fourth grade," he says, "but you have to start young and you have to start early."

Meet your match at the Transportation Symposium

Vendors and contractors can meet their match at the 13th Annual Transportation Symposium & Business Exchange.

For the first time, the conference will offer matchmaking sessions to provide suppliers, manufacturers, contractors and consultants opportunities to meet one-on-one with prime contractors in Illinois.

Those interested in matchmaking sessions must register in advance, as availability is limited.

The transportation symposium takes place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on December 1, 2009, in the Continental & International Ballrooms of the Chicago Hilton & Towers, 720 S. Michigan Ave.

Participating transportation agencies include the Illinois Tollway, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation Agency, Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace.

Other highlights include:

- Procurement forecasts for 2010
- "Success Seminars"
- Business Forum & Networking Reception

For more information and to register, please visit www.mgpgevents.com.

ECP Updates

The form to request Earned Credit Program (ECP) credit certificates is now available on the Tollway Web site, www.illinoistollway.com.

To download the form, go to the Doing Business section, click the Diversity Programs link, go to the Earned Credit Program page and open the ECP Certificate Status Report. Click on the ECP Form0006 button.

Contractors must submit this form to receive bid credits for employees hired through the ECP.

Contractors with hiring opportunities should request the referral of ECP/Workforce Investment Act eligible candidates through Deb Coats at 630-241-6800 ext. 3207.

Remember: ECP credits do not expire!

Tollway-IDOT Disparity Study to gather anecdotal information

Construction contractors and construction-related consultants doing business with the Illinois Tollway and/or the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) should watch their mail for a questionnaire from Mason Tillman Associates, LLC.

Businesses are being asked to provide anecdotal information about their experiences working with or seeking work with the Tollway or IDOT as part of a Disparity Study commissioned earlier this year by the two state transportation agencies.

Mason Tillman is a national public policy firm that was selected after a competitive bid process to perform the study. The purpose of the study is to determine whether construction and professional services contracts are being equitably awarded to ready, willing and able contractors.

Mason Tillman has hosted three community meetings across Illinois to inform local business communities of the study and request input. More than 300 individuals representing various businesses and groups have shared their experiences in working with the Tollway and IDOT.

Questionnaires will be sent to those who attended the community meetings. Those who

did not attend but would like to participate in an anecdotal interview should contact Kinndy Lin at Mason Tillman at 510-835-9012 or klin@mtaltd.com.

Results of the study are expected to be released in spring 2010.

New ECP Coordinator



Marlene Vick, the Tollway's senior manager of program development, was recently named ECP coordinator.

In this role, she's responsible for working with the ECP Advisory Board and serving as a liaison to community groups and other government agencies to explore ways to expand the program.

Marlene can be reached at 630-241-6800, ext. 2349.



Start Today!

For more information on any Diversity Program send an email to dbe@getipass.com, visit the Web site, or call 630-241-6800

