

Alliance building is workshop focus

When MSD planned to invite 30 of its contractors to a business alliance workshop, Director of Research and Productivity Assessment Mike Sweeney didn't feel like he and other staff were planning a business meeting.

"It felt more like we were planning a wedding," Sweeney said.

MSD's goal in sponsoring the session was to encourage its staff and contractors to look at unusual ways of doing business, instead of doing business as usual, according to Sweeney. "Alliances are a tool to leverage and synergize skills, in order to obtain the company's next higher performance level," he said.

But only 30 to 40 percent of business alliances meet the expectations of partnered businesses, according to Ted Hoffman of Alliance Ventures. "That's worse than the divorce rate," Hoffman said.

Like a marriage, business alliances require a lot of commitment and a lot of work from the partners involved. Yet two-thirds of the reasons that business alliances don't succeed are because of people issues, according to Rodney Brown with Kentucky's Cabinet for Economic Development. "The better you understand your partners and their strengths and weaknesses, the stronger your relationships will become," Brown said.

The workshop featured lessons in using business alliances to meet a company's goals and how to evaluate the effectiveness of existing customer and supplier relationships. It also provided exercises to help businesses decide what sort of partners they are, and the type of partners they need.

Hoffman urged participants to consider business relationships as a marriage once a contract has been executed and an alliance formed. "There will be a honeymoon for the

first hundred days, but invariably side issues detract from the alliance's mission, including other appealing ventures," Hoffman said. He recommends creating a 100-day task plan when launching a new alliance.

"And, as in a marriage prenuptial, it is advised that partners address the possibility that the alliance won't work out, requiring an agreement on an exit plan as in D-I-V-O-R-C-E," Hoffman said.

An alliance-building simulation, where participants role-played one of two companies negotiating an alliance, was one of the workshop's most educational features. Representatives of large firms were assigned to develop alliances with



how partnerships can help us achieve longer-term strategic goals," he said.

MSD Executive Director Gordon Garner said the workshop's goal was to help MSD's consultants and contractors to build more effective partnerships. "What we're looking for are better performance and better results," Garner said. "If everyone here listens to what's being said and puts it into practice, their businesses will continue to grow and be successful."

MSD provided the session through its DiverseWorks program, which is committed to educating and training minority- and woman-owned businesses, as well as other contractors and consultants. "It's all about value," according to DiverseWorks Program Administrator Deby McDaniel.

"Because MSD values our relationships with our business partners, we wanted to share alliance-building strategies that add value to the work they perform for MSD and enhance their abilities to grow. That adds value to MSD's business and the businesses of our partners."



giant companies 'owned' by minority and female entrepreneurs.

Scarlett Mattingly, president of Coulter Mapping Services, a Louisville GIS company, found the role-reversal a challenge. "We know what entrepreneurs think when they approach a large company, so it was educational to open myself up to what the other person has to go through and consider," she said.

Chris Dickinson of Gresham Smith and Partners agreed, saying he listed several attendees as possible partners for his firm. "It charged me up," Dickinson said of the workshop. "I did learn more about how you can think beyond a project-by-project relationship, and look at



Three honored as Adult Achievers

Three MSD employees were among those honored Feb. 19 as Adult Black Achievers by the Chestnut St. Family YMCA Black Achievers Program.

Fleet Services Supervisor Raymond E. Davis, West County Wastewater Treatment Plant Process Supervisor Rhonda R. Hayes and Storeroom and Inventory Supervisor Charles Holt, Jr. were chosen by their peers for their leadership and commitment to helping young people.

Since 1979, the Black Achievers Program has awarded more than \$12 million in scholarships to nearly 1,000 high school graduates, according to MSD Physical Assets Director James Hunt, who also serves on the Chestnut St. Family YMCA Board. "Adult Black Achievers have to commit to working with young people and Raymond, Rhonda and Charles stepped up to the challenge. They're doing a great job for MSD and the community," Hunt said.

Serving as a role model for youth is a point of pride for Davis, an MSD employee since 1992. "I am anxious to share my experiences and successes, and believe this also will be a great learning opportunity for me," Davis said.

Hayes, an MSD employee since 1983 and active member of her church, hopes her example will help young people. "They might see that with God in your life, a lot of hard work and the right attitude, their dreams of achievement are endless," Hayes said.

Holt, who began a second career with MSD in 1984, believes working with young people will benefit his own life. "It has given me guidance and encouraged me to live up to my potential," Holt said.

Flooding reduced thanks to recent improvements

When rainfall pelted Jefferson County and areas upstream along the Ohio River in mid-February, MSD crews moved quickly. Five floodgate street closures were installed and seven flood pumping stations along the river were activated.

Between 40 and 50 homes, mostly in the Pond Creek watershed, reported basement and first-floor flooding, according to Emergency Response and Community Relations Director Bud Schardein. MSD's Customer Service staff received more than 500 calls on Friday, February 18, Schardein said, after between four and six inches of rain drenched the area in a 24-hour period.

More significant were reports of flooding that weren't received. "In the past a rain event like this would have seen many homes flooded in Scottsdale, Candlelight, Confederate Acres, Woodland Manor and other subdivisions along Fishpool Creek," Schardein noted. "That didn't happen this time."

Reduced flooding in that area is attributed to completion of the Vulcan Quarry stormwater detention basin, which holds back stormwater from Fishpool Creek and slowly releases it after rains have subsided. The basin can hold up to 2.5 million gallons. "This rain event proved that the diversion of water from Fishpool Creek to Vulcan Quarry is effective in minimizing flooding in this area," Schardein said.

The Vulcan Quarry basin is part of a five-year, \$17-million flood control project now underway in the Pond Creek watershed through a partnership between MSD and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Additional channel improvements along creeks in the area and construction of another flood control basin along Northern Ditch are planned.



Mill Creek watershed area

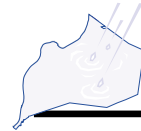
Assessments set for two sewer projects

MSD's Board has approved customer assessment charges for two completed sanitary sewer projects.

Assessments are the portion of sewer construction costs that customers pay in order to be connected to the sewer system.

The \$12 million Oak Hills Project extended 14 miles of sanitary sewer to serve 962 residential and commercial properties along Dixie Highway between E. Rockford Ln. and St. Andrews Church Rd. The project also included about four miles of drainage improvements that are not included in the assessment. Property owners will each pay assessments ranging between \$3,800 and \$7,220.

The \$1.6 million Big Run/BR-6C Project extended about one mile of sanitary sewer to serve 184 residential properties along Flintlock Dr., Doyle Dr., Doe Run Rd., Powder Horn Dr. and Milner Dr. The project also included 1.5 miles of drainage improvements. Property owners will each pay assessments ranging between \$4,800 and \$6,240.



Wet Weather/Water Quality Area Team

Sewer rehab continues in Hikes Point area

A project to rehabilitate aging sanitary sewers in the Hikes Point area will use a technique that's the opposite of what MSD normally does.

"Generally our job is to keep sewer lines intact," explained Area Team Leader Roddy Williams. In order to increase the size of the sewer lines in the area, the old lines must be removed. Williams said MSD will use a technique called pipe bursting to remove existing 15- and 16-inch sewer lines, and replace them with 21-inch high-density polyethylene pipe.

By increasing the size of sewer lines, Williams said two sanitary sewer overflows that frequently occur in the area should be substantially reduced. The pipe-bursting technique allows MSD to replace the lines without excavation, reducing the time required to complete the project by about six months and minimizing inconvenience to area residents, at about \$100,000 less in cost.

In addition, an ongoing project in the area includes disconnecting private property sump pumps that send stormwater into the sewers, which contributes to overflows during rains. "People always ask what should be discharged into sewers and the answer is simple," Williams said. "If you buy it from the water company, it needs to go into the sewer system."

Currently properties in the project area, which includes Rio Rita Ave. and Boaries Ln., are prone to basement backups when it rains. As a preventive measure, MSD pumps out sewers in the area to prevent sanitary sewer backups.

Flynn Brothers Contracting, Inc., will perform the work for \$483,779. It is expected to be completed this spring.