



Press Release



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California Women Help Build Backbone of High-Speed Rail in Central Valley

FRESNO, Calif. – In recognition of National Women in Construction Week, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is honoring the women who are working to build the nation’s first high-speed rail program in the Central Valley. As construction advances, the Authority remains committed to promoting diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace.

To date, approximately 300 men and women have been dispatched to multiple work sites within Construction Package 1, the first 29 miles of the high-speed rail from Avenue 17 in Madera to American Avenue in Fresno. These workers represent a fraction of the construction workforce that will be needed to build the entire system from San Francisco to the Los Angeles area.

“While there are more than one-million women employed in the construction industry, that only comprises about ten percent of the construction workforce,” said Sandy Field, the immediate past-president of The National Association of Women in Construction. “During Women in Construction Week we say thank you to women for their important contribution to this field and we hope this brings attention to the industry and encourages others to consider it as a viable career.”

“This project means a lot to the Central Valley, and we want to make sure that women in this region have an opportunity to contribute to this project and help ensure its success,” said Central Valley Regional Director Diana Gomez. “We have over 100 miles now under construction in the Valley, and it’s the perfect time for women who want to learn the trade to join us.”

By sharing these stories, the Authority hopes these women will serve as an inspiration to those considering a career in the industry.

To learn more about Women in Construction Week visit http://www.nawic.org/nawic/WIC_Week_2016.asp

Women in Construction: **Becky Zahourek**



“If men can do the job, we can do it too.” This has been Becky Zahourek’s mentality since she started truck driving school ten years ago.

Growing up, Becky didn’t know what she wanted to do for a career; she just knew she loved the outdoors, big trucks and dirt. Eventually, she decided to put herself through truck driving school in Fresno. That’s where she met Curtis Lovett, owner of Outback Materials. Becky told him, “One day, I will be driving a truck for your company.”

Ten years later, Becky is a driver for Outback Materials. As a Small Business contractor for Tutor Perini/ Zachry Parsons, Outback Materials is responsible for delivering concrete for Construction Package 1. Becky likes being a truck driver because she gets alone time and gets to travel to work on different projects.

Working with mostly men can be intimidating, but not for Becky. “I’m pretty tough and most of the time the men are respectful,” she says.

Becky is proud to work on such a huge project and loves being surrounded by hardworking people. She enjoys being involved in the construction of high-speed rail and seeing the progression of the project as it unfolds before her eyes.

Women in Construction: **Kristen Katchadourian**



Before most people have had their first cup of coffee, 27-year-old Kristen Katchadourian is making deliveries to job sites up and down the Central Valley. As the Project Manager for Katch Environmental, Inc., Kristen is out the door by 6:30 a.m. delivering generators, water trailers and any other materials the job site may need. “In an industry full of men, I get to be a woman getting my hands dirty and serve as site-support for our crew members out in the field.”

The Fresno-based small business, owned and operated by her father Paul Katchadourian, has been contracted to do hazardous materials abatement and demolition on the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley.

Kristen, a Valley native, says she enjoys her job, but is especially excited to work for a company that plays a role in high-speed

rail. “It’s such an incredible project that we get to be a part of,” she says. “For the high-speed rail to start here, it’s just an amazing opportunity for Fresno.”

After attending Biola University in Los Angeles, Kristen thought she would pursue a career in college ministry and live in Southern California. But she soon realized her heart remained in the Valley and decided to work alongside her father.

“I think Fresno has the potential to be the best version of itself and high-speed rail is helping the DNA of this city to flourish.”

Women in Construction: **Tammy Prado**



Tammy (Tomas) Prado spent the first 20 years of her professional career as a book keeper. When her daughter, Savannah, was born in 1996, she knew she needed to find a career that could provide a better future for her family. In 2002, she was indentured into the Carpenters Union and is now working at the first construction site for high-speed rail in the Central Valley.

Born and raised in Madera, she describes her current work on the Fresno River Viaduct as, “the perfect job; I’m only 8 minutes away from home, have great co-workers, a safe environment and great pay. I couldn’t ask for anything else.”

Tammy is one of eight carpenters working at the Fresno River Viaduct. She’s also the only woman. While being the only woman on a construction site could be intimidating for some, Tammy fondly remembers the journeymen and foremen who were helpful and encouraged her along the way. “If you let people tell you to just sweep up or do other minor tasks, then you aren’t going to learn. You have to show them that you are hungry and want to learn and then they will teach you. I always gave 100 percent and they saw that.”

She offers this advice to other young women: “Not everyone is meant for college; not because you aren’t smart enough, but you might not want to spend your whole day inside in class or in an office. If you like working with your hands and don’t mind getting dirty, then this is the way to go.”

Tammy will be eligible for retirement soon, but plans to keep working on the high-speed rail project for as long as she can.