



ACE Forum Held in February

ACE is a joint venture of the AIA, AGC & ACEC

On February 20th, AGC members had an exclusive, up-close discussion with the Sr. Leadership of Virginia's Department of General Services (DGS) at the kick off of the ACE Forum. ACE is a joint venture of the American Institute of Architects, Associated General Contractors & American Council of Engineering Companies of VA, to *educate and promote best practices of the design and construction industry*. What resulted was a better understanding of the decision matrix at DGS, some innovative ideas for DGS to consider and where DGS is going in the future.

Joe Damico, the new director of DGS, kicked off the forum with some general comments about DGS. While Mr. Damico is the new Director at DGS, he has been around DGS for quite a while. There is over \$1.8 Billion of new construction which is overseen by the Agency and they are continuing to look at how to do things better. This forum was just the avenue Mr. Damico was looking for to discuss complex issues with the design and building community. He is looking for another forum to discuss key legislative issues later this summer.

A panel discussion was led by Mike Coppa bringing a team of key decision makers talking about the environment DGS is dealing with. Various topics were addressed:

Technology: DGS is open to what you want to work with. Despite the promise of BIM as utopia, we are not there yet. Keeping up with electronic documents is still difficult.

VEES: High performance building act is our guiding principle. While there are no changes unless legislation changes. DGS is open to the idea of dropping LEED requirements for State Buildings but require High Performance Buildings.

SWaM: It's an area that effects lots of folks. What many thought would be bi-partisan opportunity this legislative session to address significant confusion by the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity has failed. All attendees are concerned with the Governors Executive Order 20 around reaching the 42% goal of SWaM business. DGS would like to pick this back up as an appropriate time this summer. There are over 100,000 vendors of which 13,000 are "small". No matter the decision, there will be winners and losers. DGS reminded attendees this issue is "local, local, local". It's the decision of owning agency to make the choice that what works best for them and is the direction one should go.

Business Development: If you have limited state experience, how do you start gaining that experience? Qualification forms and there is Job Order Contracting (JOC) newer legislation - set up as a term contract for the small items like maintenance. It is an effort to help the firms with little experience begin to gain that experience. Cooperative procurement is not allowed in construction and it should stay that way.

After the panel discussion, DGS attendees spread out into various sections of the room and met with attendees in small groups to discuss more in-depth issues in charrettes.

Future forums will feature federal government, local government, universities and health systems and will be held around the state.