



Staten Island Advance

Staten Island construction firm finishes city program and wins sidewalk contract

By Tracey Porpora



SAFECO Construction obtained a city sidewalk and curb installation contract after graduating the city's Compete to Win Program

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- After graduating from the city's "Compete to Win" program, Dan Pretto, president of Charleston-based SAFECO Construction, says he was able to secure a \$1.7 million sidewalk and curb installation contract with the city.

"I applied to the program because I was having difficulty getting a standard bond line. ... After going through the eight-month program that covered everything from bonding to insurance and construction accounting, I was awarded a city Department of Design and Construction contract that started at \$1.7 million for pedestrian sidewalks and curbs in Staten

Island," said Pretto, who attended a ceremony on Tuesday in Manhattan to mark the company's completion of the program.

Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway and city Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Robert W. Walsh presided at the graduation of the first cohort of the city's NYC Construction Mentorship and Bond Readiness programs, two initiatives of Compete to Win.

Compete to Win is a set of five capacity building initiatives designed to help minority- and female-owned business enterprises compete for and win city contracts.

Incorporated into the program is a bond-readiness component, which helps firms secure surety bonds for city construction projects, as well as provides workshops on accounting and financial management, insurance requirements and credit repair.

"Through the program I learned there were certain changes I had to make to my company to qualify for [city contracts]," said Pretto. "It was a wonderful program. ... I am now able to bid on bigger projects."

SAFECO Construction is one of 39 certified firms graduating the construction mentorship program that will receive a three-year growth plan for their business.