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## Cover Story - March 2007

### Women Bring a Diverse Skill Set To Assorted Projects

*As the construction industry tries to attract people to its ranks, women at King County are managing some of the area's biggest projects.*

*by Lucy Bodilly*

At King County, Wash., women are as likely to be swinging a hammer on a construction site, as they are to be pushing a pen, in an effort to complete nearly \$1 billion in work over the next three years.



At Brightwater, the county's \$500 million wastewater treatment plant, Christine True oversees the entire project, which will be completed sometime in 2009. True started with the county over 20 years ago as an environmental scientist, and made her way into the limelight by continuing her business education and showing acumen at organizational and

management skills. Her advice to women, "King County is a great place for women to be in construction," she says. Workplace diversity makes it much easier for women's skills to be noticed and for females to reach the upper levels of management.

Also on the Brightwater project is Darlene Septelka, who started working in the field as an engineer on the East Coast, also about 20 years ago. Judy Cochran is her counterpart.

#### Workforce Issues

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*By Jeremy T. Vermilyea*

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*By Heather Winfrey*

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Septelka completed her masters in construction management at the University of Washington, taught at the construction management department at Washington State University and is now one of two female project managers at Brightwater. When she worked with the Construction Center for Excellence in Renton, Wash. to create a DVD that is being shown across the country to women interested in entering the industry, she called herself "persistent." She is still active in construction education, working with the Design Build Institute of America, Northwest Chapter and with the state of Washington on the benefits of design build construction.

Judy Riley, who oversees all the transportation projects for King County, including the several park and rides now under construction, originally worked for Metro, the original government agency in charge of wastewater treatment and transportation in the Seattle

area. A Masters in Business Administration made it easier to be promoted. In her experience, "women are just better communicators than men, and better at bringing a consensus," she says. Due to retire in two years, she predicts the next person to head her division will come from an engineering background, instead of a business background. "Ten or 15 years ago, everyone in the transportation and wastewater departments had engineering backgrounds, but the county found it needed people with a business perspective to run projects, too," she says. "Not all of us who run departments could go out to work on a jobsite, but we've learned enough engineering to know if things are running properly," Riley says.

Brown, in charge of Harborview's Ninth and Jefferson Building.

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### **Brightwater Update**

Work at Brightwater right now is taking place at northern portion of the site, where wetland mitigation and sitework is under way. When completed, much of this space will be open to the public and will include salmon habitat, trails and an education center.

The existing large storm water pond just north of the Brightwater office will be reshaped into an improved Lower Pond for storm water storage and treatment.

Habitat restoration will include the planting of over 22,000 plants including 5,000 seedling trees, as well as other native plant species. Boardwalks and trails will be constructed, as well as an environmental educational field house designed by local architect and artist Steve Badanes - who will be working with local area trade students to construct the eco-friendly structure.

Bids for the next large Brightwater contract, the influent pump station, estimated at \$66 million were scheduled to be opened in late February.

Construction began in early September on six miles of underground tunnels with a Montreal based joint venture, Vinci/Parsons RCI/Frontier-Kemper, acting as the contractor \$209.7 contract.

The scope of work on the central tunnel contract includes building two tunnels, one from Kenmore to the North Creek Business Park in Bothell and another from Kenmore to Ballinger Way Northeast in Shoreline. The combined length of the tunnels will be about six miles.

Crews will also excavate two deep shafts to launch and remove the tunnel-boring machines.

The contractor will install six pipes in the tunnel ranging from 14 inches to 126 inches in diameter along with two fiber-optic cables to monitor Brightwater facilities.

The North Creek to Kenmore tunnel segment will hold a 72-inch-diameter pipe to carry treated wastewater through the system to an outfall in Puget Sound, a 54-inch pipe to carry untreated wastewater to an influent pump station where it will be pushed to Brightwater for treatment, and a 24-inch pipe for reclaimed water.

The Kenmore-to-Shoreline segment will hold two 14-inch reclaimed water pipes and a 126-inch-diameter pipe to carry treated wastewater to the outfall.

Construction on the central tunnel is scheduled to be completed in 2010. Jacobs Civil to provide construction management services for the conveyance facilities. MWH/Jacobs Associates is designing the system as a joint venture, and CDM is providing geotechnical work as part of tunnel design.

Brightwater tunnel construction on the east segment of the conveyance system has been under way since March. Kenny/Shea/Traylor was awarded the contract to build the Brightwater tunnel from North Creek to the treatment plant site on State Route 9.

### **Atlantic Street Construction Burien Park and Ride**

Under Judy Riley's command is the construction at the Atlantic Street facility near Safeco Field in South Seattle and several park and rides including the one in Burien.

King County Metro Transit plans to add 450 new buses to its fleet by 2020, and is expanding its bus parking and maintenance facilities in Seattle's SODO industrial district.

Construction of the new Burien Transit Center began last fall and will be completed this summer. When finished, the new transit center will have a s passenger platform, new passenger shelters, benches, improved lighting for security, and public art works.

The transit center project budget is approximately \$8 million, which includes funding from a combination of local and federal grant funds.

Kathy Brown heads up construction at the 440,000 sq ft Ninth and Jefferson Building, the gateway of the Harborview Medical Center Campus in downtown Seattle. The building exterior is a combination of classic brick, punched window openings and granite columns at street level. A glass curtain wall along with metal panels metal grilles and granite were woven together to enclose the tower. The building will provide a loading dock for both the hospital and the building.

The building also includes flexible efficient floors with a structural grid system designed for medical use.

Benefits of the new design are:

Centrally located parking elevators, improved parking efficiency, retail space.

The parking garage will be completed in October 2007 and the Medical office building will be done in November 2008.

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