



BSD

Continued from Page 8

The council organizes several cultural observances, including Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Juneteenth, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and Veterans Day. These celebrations make BSD a more inclusive organization for many and helps to develop all team members’ cultural competency.

During the celebration of Women’s History Month in March, the council asked BSD team members to submit incredible stories about the women that work around them. In addition, they hosted a Be In the Know Session with female BSD operators who shared their stories and successes. For Black History Month, the council hosted a two-part

Be In the Know Session which began with a panel of experts and Lee and Rose Brown. The Browns shared their wisdom and experience from protests during the Civil Rights Movement. The second half of the program focused on black health and wellness and included a panel of healthcare professionals.

The Diversity and Inclusion Council is also the home of Employee Resource Groups — voluntary, employee-led groups whose members share a common interest or identity and work to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace. A Military Veteran and Reservists ERG, led by veteran or reservist team members, is active and led a volunteer event at

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

“We’re always looking to expand the Diversity and Inclusion council. Other folks have expressed an interest in starting ERGs,” said Stacy. “Our team members are really excited about these initiatives. They get so motivated and engaged when they’re asked to lead.”

New ERG for Veterans, Reservists forms at BSD.

Bi-State Development is now home to its first Employee Resource Group — the Military Veterans and Reservists ERG. With a count of 13 official members, the group gives team members who served or are in the reserves a way to connect while also helping with

veteran-related causes in the community.

What’s next for Bi-State Development and DEI?

At BSD, they view focusing on DEI as more than just a moral obligation; it’s an imperative that affects their ability to serve the St. Louis region. Their understanding of zero-tolerance policies, cultural competency awareness, and team member training are examples of day-to-day efforts that play an essential role in a better workplace. You can feel the impact of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion throughout the Bi-State Development culture.

Bi-State Development is truly building a culture of inclusion and belonging like no other.

INCLUSION

Continued from Page 9

- Illinois began legally recognizing nonbinary gender markers (nonbinary meaning a person whose gender identity is neither male nor female) in 2020, Missouri has no legal recognition.

- Illinois has full inclusion of sexual orientation (SO) and gender identity (GI) as protected attributes in its Human Rights Act, Missouri has none.

- Illinois has explicitly banned discrimination against LGBTQ persons in employment and housing since 2006; Missouri has zero protections (some municipalities do).

- Neither state has LGBTQ inclusive Family Leave Laws.

Businesses like *consistency* and *clarity*. In a perfect world, Company ABC’s Executive Vice President of Human Resources, their Senior VP of Talent Acquisition, and VP of DEI would love a single employee handbook, workplace policies, code of conduct, benefits/perks, for their offices in Portland, Oregon, AND Portland, Maine.

We don’t live in that world, we live in this one, a slightly dented but very aspirational version of THAT one...

with federal rules and fifty different sets of state policies and enforcement.

Accordingly, we increasingly see the corporate world moving out ahead of society and lawmakers both in sorting out what workplace inclusion looks like for a host of attributes.

This is a good thing.

I’d one day like to see DEI viewed not as a “stick,” something we do to avoid risk, negative press, and reputational damage, but instead, as the golden “carrot,” creating value in the workspace through innovation, talent retention, and enhanced operational dynamics.

A sample of what I consult, educate, and advocate for within business space involves policy (how to handle gender transition in the workplace), language (removing unnecessarily gendered language and using more inclusive language), cultural competency (building shared values while deconstructing biases), and reducing the assumptions that limit our vision.

Does this snapshot of DEI in our region look like a whole lot of change? Maybe a little scary?

Yes.

But let me reassure you.

We don’t do business today the way we did business ten years ago, and if we want to be in business in ten years’ time, we’ll continue to grow and change.

Jaimie Hileman is the executive director at TES Trans Education Service and can be reached at jaimiehileman@transedservice.com. For more information on training, facilitations, and services, visit www.transedservice.com.

AMEREN ILLINOIS

Continued from Page 10

They provide an active forum for discussion and exploration of cultural differences and offer avenues to welcome new employees, develop professional skills, expand networks, perform community outreach. Ultimately, ERGs assist Ameren Illinois to improve the organization’s leadership development process, to drive results, to forge relationships, and to ensure alignment between our business and diversity strategies.

IBJ: How do your company values and policies specifically express a commitment to DE&I?

Singh: In mid-May, Ameren marked its 14th consecutive year as one of the nation’s top utilities for DE&I. In fact, it was the third time the company was recognized as DiversityInc’s top-ranked utility. Ameren was placed in the Top 50 of all types of companies nationwide for environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, and named a Top Company for Veterans and Black Executives. Think about that ... 14 consecutive years Ameren has been recognized for diversity leadership. To me, that means the company is not looking in the

rear-view mirror, or content to rest on past achievements, but is always moving forward with an eye toward continuous improvements in the DE&I space.

IBJ: Are there any issues in your labor market pool that impede a balance in your workforce when it comes to DE&I? If so, what HR/recruitment strategies have been set by Ameren Illinois to overcome them?

Singh: While the pandemic has coined the phrase the great resignation and currently, we are in a tight labor market, there are no impediments to hiring and retaining diverse employees if you’re willing to go beyond traditional means.

Gone are the days of just posting a job and watching the applications roll in. In the last few years especially, the workplace balance has shifted and the jobseekers have many more options than they have had before.

It means that we will have to be even more creative in recruiting diverse talent to meet our business objectives. I look forward to working with our HR team to address these challenges.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES SINCE 1921

SM WILSON

BEYOND THE BUILD®

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
GENERAL CONTRACTING