

Innovative Suntrax to Undergo Next Phase of Construction

ORLANDO, Fla. - Today, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced the second phase of construction for America's newest autonomous vehicle test facility will begin this fall. Slated to be completed in late 2021, phase two of SunTrax will consist of areas built in its infield to test and challenge autonomous vehicles.

"In order for Florida to have a modern transportation system that meets the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors, we must embrace emerging technology," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "Once completed, SunTrax will further strengthen Florida's position as a national leader in automated vehicle testing and research."

SunTrax will also feature various segmented testing environments, including:

- An urban area to simulate intersection configurations and signalization;
- A roadway geometry track made up of complex horizontal and vertical curves;
- A pick-up/drop-off area to replicate multimodal passenger transfers, such as airports; and
- An augmented reality pad to create immersive, computer-generated environments.

"As Florida's population continues to grow, it is essential to expand our transportation system to meet current and future needs," said Florida Department of

Transportation Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. "We are proud to be home to the first state-owned autonomous vehicle testing facility in the country. By investing in research, testing and development of autonomous vehicles at SunTrax, Florida will continue to break the mold in multimodal transportation."

Shipping containers will be used to create flexible and reconfigurable facades simulating citylike buildings in the facility's infield. Phase one of SunTrax, a 2.25-mile oval track on 475 acres in Polk County, Florida, was completed in May 2019. SunTrax is being developed by FDOT. When fully operational, the facility's test sectors will be available for lease to companies working in the connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) industry- from technology start-ups to established equipment manufacturers.

In January, Governor DeSantis and FDOT Secretary Thibault visited the SunTrax construction site as Governor DeSantis outlined his vision for the state's transportation system, which include priorities to improve safety, reduce congestion and embrace innovative technology. This summer, Governor DeSantis selected SunTrax as the backdrop for the signing of House Bill 311, which amends existing laws to allow for expanded use of self-driving vehicles on Florida roads.

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About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with FDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

UWF to offer new construction management degree

The proposed program currently operates as a specialization in building construction within the Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology program. Dr. George Ellenberg, provost and senior vice president, says repositioning it as a stand-alone degree will increase the program's visibility and provide students and potential employers with a better understanding of the education and training graduates receive from UWF.

"We are responding to local workforce demand for the construction management industry, and this offering will help satisfy many of those needs," Ellenberg said. "Students and potential employers can be assured that this will be a rigorous program that prepares graduates for a career in the field."

Housed in the Department of Administration and Law in the College of Education and Professional Studies, the new program will consist of 120 semester hours, taught in the traditional face-to-face format. Students will graduate prepared for various positions in the building construction and general contracting industries including, construction management, supervision, inspection and estimation.

"The Northwest Florida community will benefit greatly from the addition of this program," said Dr. William

Crawley, dean of the UWF College of Education and Professional Studies. "Alongside building construction occupations, our area is growing and we have the opportunity to retain our graduates' local talent. Equally important, based on the caliber of our other programs, potential employers can have confidence in hiring the students and alumni of the building construction management program in the future."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts more than 11% growth in construction management related occupations through 2026 with an annual median wage for construction managers of \$93,370. In addition, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity projects more than 12% growth in construction management jobs in the state of Florida through 2026 with an annual median wage of \$79,850. In the local counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton, construction of buildings and specialty trade contractors ranked among the top 20 fastest growth industries.

For more information about the Bachelor of Science in Construction Management, visit uwf.edu/construction.

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Supportive Services Offered:

- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Building a Website



Within the past 3 months,
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in obtaining

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CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.