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The renovation of Kauffman and Arrowhead stadiums is an immense capital project that sports fans in the Kansas City area and across the Midwest are anxiously waiting to see. The renovations will help keep the Royals and Chiefs in Kansas City for at least 25 more years, during which they will pump millions of dollars into the local economy. And they will bring forth a strong sense of community pride.

Equally important is that during a time when the national economy has been on shaky ground, the renovations have put thousands of area laborers, contractors and engineers to work. That workforce includes people from 170 Minority Business Enterprises and Women Business Enterprises associated with this project

The Jackson County Sports Authority, Chiefs and Royals publicly stated that providing opportunities for MBEs and WBEs was a high priority for the renovations. To accomplish that, they entered into a Fair Share Agreement which established a fairness committee and an MBE/WBE coordinator to assist and monitor the construction project. This newsletter will highlight the successes of that program for other projects to follow in the future.

Thank you again for taking the time to read our newsletter. We hope that you find it informative and helpful.

Sincerely,  
Jim Rowland  
Executive Director, Jackson County Sports Complex Authority

## Taliaferro & Browne, Inc

Taliaferro & Browne, Inc.'s work on the stadium renovations is low key. And that's a good thing, says its president Leonard Graham.

That's because the Kansas City-based civil engineering firm is responsible for upgrading and relocating the

Kauffman and Arrowhead stadiums' water lines, storm sewers, sanitary sewer lines and electrical systems.

If done right, no one notices the work. But if not, Chiefs and Royals fans could encounter sewer backups, toilet malfunctions and lights not working in the new concourses. "We do the work that people don't pay much attention to unless something goes wrong," said Graham.



Graham and Chief Executive Officer Hagos Andebrhan acquired Taliaferro & Browne in 1992. They have been involved in projects ranging from high-profile\_ the Sprint Center and the Power & Light District \_ to urban renewal projects that brought new homes and infrastructure to several inner-city neighborhoods.

Graham said the secret to success is simple. "If you give your client a good product and good service and take care of them," he said, "they will keep calling you back."

Besides civil engineering, Taliaferro & Browne specializes in structural engineering, land surveying and project management. At the stadiums, Taliaferro & Browne engineers have worked closely with the lead architect HOK Sports Venue Events. The expansion of the concourses- one of the most visible upgrades to the stadiums and the addition of more restrooms presented a daunting task to the engineers.

"We had to upgrade the existing systems and move them," said Bob Gregor, senior project manager for Taliaferro & Browne. "The electrical system had to be renovated as well." Both stadiums also shared the same water entry point, which would not have provided enough water for the expanded water lines. So the Taliaferro & Browne engineers designed separate water entry points for the stadiums. Taliaferro & Browne also re-designed the roads immediately adjacent Kauffman and Arrowhead stadiums, including Red Coat Drive and Lancer Lane. And at the new Chiefs Training Facility, the firm performed the site grading, designed the parking lot and oversaw the layout and relocation of all the utilities.

Taliaferro & Browne is among numerous MBEs working on the stadium renovations. But Graham said he believes the firm is known more for its good work. Andebrhan agreed. "You can get the job," he said, "but you have to do a good job. We have taken on some difficult and complicated projects and by doing them right we have developed a reputation." As for entrepreneurs who are trying to start their own engineering or contracting business, Graham suggests that they make plenty of contacts and get out in the community. "Don't just wait for an RFP to come out," he said. "If you do that, you will be way behind the curve." Graham offered another baseball analogy to make that point. "If somebody is going to hit to left field, then shift to that spot."

**Resource Links**

[State of Missouri](#)  
[City of Kansas City, Missouri](#)  
[NWBOC](#)  
[MidAmerica Minority Business Development Council](#)  
[Kansas Women's Business Center](#)  
[Nat'l Assoc. of Women in Construction](#)  
[KC Council of Women Business Owners](#)  
[Greater KC Chamber-Commerce](#)  
[Black Chamber of Commerce](#)  
[Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#)  
[Asian Chamber of Commerce](#)  
[Women's Chamber of Commerce](#)  
[KC Hispanic Assoc. Contractors Enterprises](#)  
[Missouri Women's Business Center](#)  
[KC Society of Black Architects & Engineers](#)  
[Urban League of Kansas City](#)

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**Did You Know?**

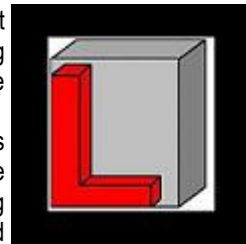
**Q:** Who was the first African American millionaire?

**A:** Madame C.J.Walker (Dec. 23, 1867 - May 25, 1919)  
Her fortune was made by developing and marketing a hugely successful line of beauty and hair products for African American Women

If you have a story idea or know of a business that should be profiled, please contact: Joli

## Lewis Block & Supply Co.

Dwayne Lewis has been a Chiefs season ticket holder for 20 years. But lately, he has been visiting Arrowhead as a building materials supplier for the stadium renovations. Lewis, owner of Lewis Block & Supply Co., supplies contractors with "hardscape" materials, which are the structural parts or hard pieces of any landscaping project such as retaining walls, brick pavers and highway wall panels.



At the stadiums, however, Lewis Block & Supply is providing 350,000 cinder blocks that will be used in the construction of the stadiums' new structural walls along the concourses. It is providing other building materials such as grout and mortar, Lewis said.

Lewis started his own business in April 2007 after working for 20 years in the cable television industry and for a short time with Sprint. He said he saw a good opportunity with selling hardscape materials because there were so few such suppliers in the area. That meant that contractors usually had to get them shipped from out of town. And with diesel fuel prices soaring, Lewis knew that trucking hardscapes from out of town had to be cost-prohibitive for contractors.

Once his business became incorporated, Lewis received Minority Business Enterprise certification from the state of Missouri. He rented a storage lot in Martin City for his supplies, took lots of contractors and suppliers to lunch, and waited seven long months for revenue to come in. Then last January, a person who Lewis had made contact with got him a contract for a landscaping job at the Hampton Inn on the Country Club Plaza. "After that, I was getting about two calls a week," Lewis said.

Lewis said the key to success was networking and making contacts. "I knew that it was important for me to shake (clients') hands," he said. He said he also learned valuable information from a class he took as part of J.E. Dunn's Minority Business Development Plan. He encourages minorities who are trying to start their own business to attend such classes and to constantly surround themselves around people they know and love.

Wimer at [Vista Communications](#)



Dwayne Lewis, owner of Lewis Block & Supply Co.

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