



Office of Civil Rights

## Building a Foundation for Success

*In conjunction with National Women's History Month, Caltrans is spotlighting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Diversified Landscape Company.*

Diversified Landscape Company President Vicki Moralez said women faced more challenges when her company was founded 30 years ago than they do now.

A lot has changed since 1989 – gas cost \$1.12 a gallon, an average home cost \$100,000, and movie theaters debuted a *Field of Dreams* and *Lethal Weapon 2*.

It was also the year Canadian Marc Lépine killed 14 women engineering students at École Polytechnique after he was not admitted to the college. It was later discovered that he was upset about women working in positions traditionally occupied by men.

Moralez said she has many stories of unfair treatment as a woman from decades ago, but she thinks society is much closer to parity than ever before. “It hasn’t been an easy road, but things have changed over the decades,” said Moralez, whose father was a small business owner.

She said running a business is like anything else in life – it has its high points and low points. “It’s important to have your family around you to encourage you,” she said. “Everything needs a foundation, and building a business is no different.”

At the same time Moralez was building a business, she was also expanding her family. Her husband is the company vice president and all three of their sons have worked in the Southern California landscape business – doing anything from digging ditches to creating project schedules.



Diversified Landscape Company now has 90 employees – all of which Moralez considers “family.” She said her team does a terrific job of adapting to customer needs and rising to any challenge. They do irrigation, concrete, and many other facets of drought-related construction throughout San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Over the years Moralez has connected with various residents, companies and state agencies, like Caltrans, which has connected her business to large road builder companies. “Early on, we discovered that the harder the project, the less people get involved. In public works, there are more obstacles and paperwork than in residential and commercial landscaping, but we found that we take on those challenges very well,” Moralez said.

And she said it is very rewarding. “With each successful project, we are building communities,” she said.

*To get certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise visit [Caltrans' Website](#).*