

# M. LUIS CONSTRUCTION

The Women's Enterprise Forum (The Forum) serves in an advisory capacity to the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) Board of Directors.



M. Luis Construction co-owners, Cidalia Luis-Akbar, President and Natalia Luis, Vice President, have been recognized and honored multiple times this year for "building roads for next generations" both figuratively and literally. Honors include: an invitation to the White House, commemorating the five-year anniversary of the U.S.'s financial collapse, celebrating their successes as a business that had persevered through the economic crisis; selected as two of twenty-five Washington, D.C. area entrepreneurs to receive the "2013 Women of Color Award"; and awarded the "Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2013 Maryland Award" in the construction and manufacturing category.

Cidalia Luis-Akbar, President and Natalia Luis, Vice President, co-owners of M. Luis Construction, a multi-generational Asphalt Manufacturer and Construction Services company established in 1985, took ownership of the business in 2008. M. Luis is one of the fastest-growing, middle-market asphalt manufacturing and construction services companies based in the Mid-Atlantic Region that has successfully manufactured hundreds of thousands of tons of asphalt and paved thousands of lane miles of roads and highways, generating over \$60 million in annual revenue and employing more than 200 people. Figuratively and literally, upholding their vision, M. Luis "builds roads for the next generation".

Cidalia and Natalia were invited to the White House for an event celebrating the role of businesses that had persevered through the economic crisis. Event participants were invited "because of their courage and determination and hard work," President Obama said.

The President outlined the successes of the Recovery Act by focusing on those who lost jobs, businesses and healthcare, as well as on the families hurt most by the recession. "We put people to work repairing roads and bridges... We helped jumpstart the flow of credit to help more businesses keep their doors open," said President Obama.

The President updated the gathering on the state of the economy and where it needs to go. Cidalia and Natalia echoed the President's thoughts with the M. Luis' commitment to investing in jobs and infrastructure:

"It was a privilege and an honor to meet the President and be chosen for this event. We're proud of the company's accomplishments. Our growth shows the importance of industry-government partnerships and the exponential impact that loan programs can have," said Cidalia.

"As entrepreneurs, we are excited to play a role in helping to move the economy forward," said Natalia.

In addition, the M. Luis Construction Plant located in Rockville, Maryland was chosen as the venue where President O'Bara spoke to the nation as he addressed the recent



**CIDALIA LUIS-AKBAR**  
President  
**NATALIA LUIS**  
Vice President  
M. Luis Construction

Government shutdown. The President highlighted the role of businesses like M. Luis Construction as contributors to the economy's recovery over past three years. Upon learning more about M. Luis' beginnings during a tour of the plant, President O'Bama cited them as an example of the American Dream.

Earlier this year, at a gala held on June 26, Cidalia and Natalia were recipients of the 'Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2013 Award in Maryland', in the construction and manufacturing category. This prestigious business award recognizes the significant contributions of entrepreneurs who inspire others with their vision, leadership and achievement.

Their latest recognition occurred at an event held on October 25, 2013, where Cidalia and Natalia were honored as two of twenty-five women entrepreneurs from the Washington, D.C. area who were selected to receive the '2013 Women of Color Award' from 100 Black Men of Greater Washington, D.C. The award was presented in partnership with the Women Presidents' Organization (WPO), and is based upon the success of these distinguished business leaders and their service to the community. The awards are sponsored by IBM and UPS.

Cidalia and Natalia heard about WBENC-certification through a friend in the National Association for Women Business Owners (NAWBO); M. Luis Construction became certified in 2010. The sisters exuded enthusiasm as they shared the countless benefits around being involved with WBENC.

"It is amazing to be part of this organization which includes a high caliber of like-minded women. When we say that we are part of the WBENC-certified pool of professional women business owners, people pay attention. WBENC-certification is an accreditation with boundless credibility. We interact frequently with Sandra Eberhard, Executive Director of our local RPO, WPEO-DC. She has a drop of honey in her heart and clearly cares so much about the organization. WBENC affiliation is like having a built in "Sisterhood Rolodex" that incorporates many categories of support: help, resources, advice, opinions, handholding and networking. The organization is comprised of kind women who always thinking of others in addition to themselves," said Cidalia.

Cidalia and Natalia are 2011 TUCK-WBENC Executive Education program graduates and recommend participation in it to all WBENC-Certified Women Business Owners:

"The TUCK-WBENC experience was one of the best educational programs that we have attended. Outstanding instructors taught extraordinary business principles which incorporated ways to create competitive advantage and robustness in our business. Their lessons continue to be "pearls of wisdom" that have helped us to flourish. The quality of education is second to none," said Cidalia.

Their ongoing success is supported by their heartfelt belief: "Dream as high as you want to dream – anything is possible."

For more information on M. Luis Construction access their website:

<http://mluisconstruction.com/>