



Ms. Sonya Montgomery

President & CEO

Sonya Montgomery is the Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer of The Desoto Group, the first Black-owned EPC firm in the United States to self-perform both gas and electric distribution services. Since 2010, she has built the company into a nationally recognized partner for leading utilities including Georgia Power, Florida Power & Light, NiSource, Entergy, Duke, and AEP.

She is a **U.S. Army veteran of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm** and a certified **Minority-, Woman-, and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (MBE, WOSB, WBENC, SDVOSB, VOSB, DBE, NMSDC)** leader. Under her direction, Desoto has delivered critical infrastructure projects and emergency storm mobilizations, including large-scale transmission and distribution recovery following **Hurricane Francine**. She is known for executing safely, on time, and on budget under the most challenging conditions.

Ms. Montgomery also established a **U.S. Department of Labor-registered Apprenticeship Program** to expand the utility workforce pipeline with veterans, women, and underrepresented talent. She is frequently engaged by utilities for her leadership in **storm readiness, supplier diversity, and program management**. Her leadership reflects a unique balance of **entrepreneurial vision, operational discipline, and social impact**, positioning Desoto as both a trusted EPC partner and a national leader in inclusive infrastructure growth.



Gabriella Guariniello

General Counsel & Chief Compliance Officer

Gabriella Guariniello serves as General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer of The DeSoto Group, advising the executive team on corporate governance, risk mitigation, and regulatory compliance. She ensures the company's legal and compliance frameworks scale effectively with growth.

Before joining DeSoto, Ms. Guariniello was an associate at Holland & Knight LLP in the corporate services department, where she focused on mergers and acquisitions, securities law, and corporate governance. She represented private and public companies in transactions ranging from \$2 million to \$3 billion. Ms. Guariniello earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Florida's Levin College of Law and a Bachelor's in International Business and Marketing from the University of Tampa.

Key Competencies

- General Counsel & Chief Compliance Officer, The DeSoto Group
- Expertise: corporate governance, risk mitigation, regulatory compliance
- Former Associate, Holland & Knight LLP – corporate services (M&A, securities, governance)
- Legal advisor on transactions ranging from \$2M–\$3B
- Juris Doctor – University of Florida Levin College of Law
- Bachelor's in International Business & Marketing – University of Tampa

Dr. Monica M. Gordon, Ed.D.

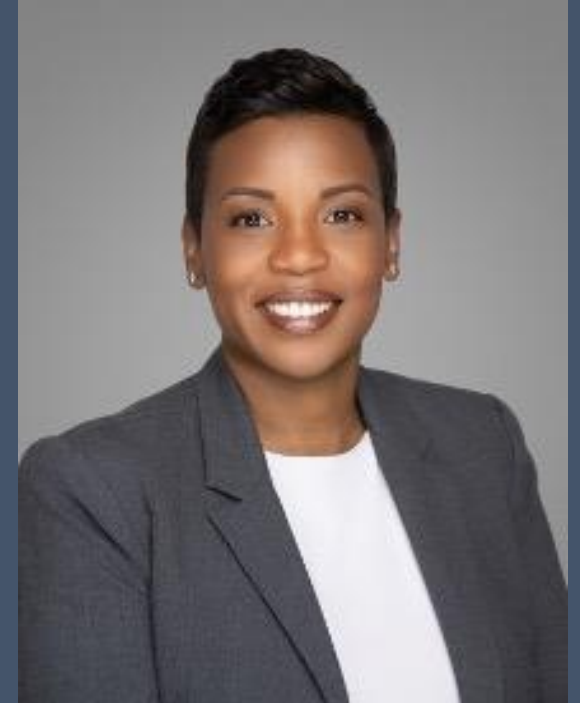
Chief of Staff

Dr. Monica M. Gordon serves as Chief of Staff at The DeSoto Group, where she partners with the CEO and executive leadership team to drive operational alignment, culture transformation, and strategic clarity across all business lines. With more than 20 years of leadership experience across education, government, and private industry, she specializes in organizational development, systems thinking, and enterprise-wide process improvement.

Nationally, Dr. Gordon has represented Florida as State Representative for the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and chaired Strategic Leadership for the Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA). She holds a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership, a Master of Science in Educational Leadership, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Key Competencies

- Operational alignment and strategic execution
- Organizational development and systems design
- Cross-sector leadership (education, government, private industry)
- Former State Representative – NAESP; Chair of Strategic Leadership – FASA
- Ed.D., Organizational Leadership – Nova Southeastern University
- M.S., Educational Leadership – Barry University
- B.S., Business Administration – Florida A&M University



Joe Surra

Senior Vice President, Operations

Joe Surra serves as Senior Vice President of Operations at The DeSoto Group, overseeing strategic execution and performance across gas construction, electrical construction, utilities, and safety/asset management. With more than 20 years of experience in engineering, construction, and executive leadership, he has led high-performing teams, launched new service lines, and delivered complex infrastructure programs with disciplined execution and clear strategic vision.

Mr. Surra holds a B.S. in Environmental Resource Management from Pennsylvania State University, completed the Business Analysis program at Villanova University, and maintains certifications in USACE Regulatory IV – Wetland Delineation and Stormwater Management.

Key Competencies

- Operations leadership across gas, electric, utilities, and safety
- Strategic execution and performance management
- Engineering and construction expertise
- Service line development and workforce leadership
- Certified in USACE Regulatory IV – Wetland Delineation & Stormwater Management
- B.S., Environmental Resource Management – Penn State
- Business Analysis Program – Villanova University





Tyree Daniels

Director, Electric Transmission

Thaddaeus “Tyree” Daniels serves as Director of Transmission Operations at The DeSoto Group, bringing nearly 20 years of progressive experience in the utility industry. His career path includes truck operator and lineman to foreman, construction manager, and transmission supervisor and provides him with unmatched hands-on knowledge of grid systems from 46kV to 500kV.

Mr. Daniels has successfully led large-scale storm restoration efforts, including coordinating more than 130 crews and 1,400 personnel during Hurricane Helene, restoring critical transmission systems across multiple regions. He is recognized as a proven safety leader, effective communicator, and developer of high-performing teams. A third-generation transmission professional, he takes pride in advancing reliability, safety, and operational excellence for the nation’s energy infrastructure.

Key Competencies

- Nearly 20 years of utility industry experience (46kV–500kV)
- Career progression from lineman to supervisor → Director of Transmission
- Led storm restoration for 130+ crews / 1,400+ personnel (Hurricane Helene)
- Expertise in safety leadership, union collaboration, and cross-department execution
- Deep practical knowledge of grid systems and large-scale project delivery
- Pipeline Leadership Program graduate; Spirit of Safety & Sam Green Award recipient
- Level 2 DE&I certified; active on multiple transmission safety and leadership councils



Brian Miller

VP, Gas Construction

Brian Miller, Vice President of Gas Construction, is an indispensable asset to The DeSoto Group, overseeing field operations, rigorous project execution, and strategic workforce development. His remarkable career, spanning virtually every operational role in gas construction, provides him with unparalleled practical insight into critical infrastructure projects. This deep, hands-on experience ensures that all initiatives are managed from inception to completion with an unwavering focus on efficiency and tangible results for stakeholders. Mr. Miller's leadership is defined by his commitment to safe, reliable, and cost-effective project delivery, cultivating high-performing teams and fostering a culture of excellence.

Key Qualifications

- Extensive career spanning virtually every operational role in gas construction
- Unparalleled practical insight into critical infrastructure projects
- Proven ability to deliver efficiency and results for stakeholders
- Exceeds industry standards for safety and operational excellence
- Strategic vision for cultivating high-performing teams and empowering the workforce
- Educational background: Community College of Allegheny County and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)
- Core competencies in field operations, safety compliance, project execution, and workforce development

Parish Crowder

VP, Utilities

Parish Crowder is Vice President of Utilities at The DeSoto Group, leading the company's utility services portfolio across distribution line construction, substations, civil/structural projects, and regulatory compliance. He ensures safe, cost-effective, and compliant delivery while aligning the utilities division with DeSoto's national growth strategy.

An Army veteran with more than 15 years of operational and leadership experience, Mr. Crowder previously served with Duke Energy as a Fleet Vehicle Maintenance Technician III, where he developed preventative maintenance programs and chaired site safety initiatives. His military service included roles as shop foreman and platoon leader, maintaining a 95% readiness rate and training over 40 soldiers in technical and leadership skills.

Key Competencies

- Leadership and operational expertise in utilities and fleet systems
- Distribution line construction, substations, civil/structural services
- Regulatory compliance and safety performance
- Former Fleet Vehicle Maintenance Technician III – Duke Energy
- U.S. Army Veteran – shop foreman & platoon leader
- B.S. in Business Administration – University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Skilled in team building, mentoring, and cross-functional collaboration

