The Advocate:
The first line of Advocacy for Minority, Women & Emerging Small Businesses

Advocate’s Message

Happy Holidays. It is hard to believe that we are again facing the end of another year. The last year has been full of challenging experiences. Through it all however we have been reminded of the entrepreneurial spirit of Oregon’s minority and women businesses.

While many businesses have downsized leaving individuals potentially unemployed, minority and women entrepreneurs have chosen to go into business for themselves in record numbers.

Nowhere was this entrepreneurial spirit felt more than at the recent Governor’s Marketplace Conference. With attendance hitting 300 during the day long event, business owners could be seen scurrying from session to session to hear about business opportunities with the state and other government entities. Exemplifying this spirit were two small business owners who were honored by Governor Kulongoski for their commitment to improving the business climate in Oregon.

In his welcoming comments at the conference, Governor Kulongoski referred to two specific pieces of legislation that will create jobs and economic development for Oregon businesses: Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) and the building of a major league stadium in Portland. The upcoming OTIA projects translate into 2.5 billion dollars worth of bridge and highway work. Over the next several months, the Advocate’s Office will be heavily involved in getting information out about OTIA and in providing training and networking opportunities for certified firms to meet the decision-makers in these projects. Be watching for e-mail or fax notices about upcoming events that could mean a business opportunity for you.

May your New Year be happy and prosperous.

Governor’s Marketplace Grows for Fourth Straight Year

The Governor’s Marketplace 2003 was busy to say the least. General Sessions, a visit from the Governor, Keynote Speech at lunch, Workshops, Government Exhibits, Buyer One-on-One Sessions and networking business to business - there was little time to waste. Everyone was on the move, the watch word of the day was business with a capital B.

The Kingstad Meeting Center, the location for this year’s event, was packed with a record-breaking 325 people at lunch. Many agency representatives and attendees found themselves eating in the overflow room. The attendance has grown so rapidly over the last few years that finding a centrally located facility in the valley has become nearly impossible. The search is on to find a suitable and larger facility for next year.

Special points of interest:

- Willamette Graduate Student Researches MWESB Utilization Tracking
- Women Owned Businesses Growing in Numbers
- Preferred Worker Program, a Benefit to Oregon Employers
- Business Owners Honored at Marketplace
- “Smart Buy” Program Kicks Off
Minority & Woman Business Owners Honored

This year the Marketplace Committee felt it would be appropriate to honor two of the outstanding vendors involved with the Minority, Women & Emerging Small Business Office. Both Cindy Rinella, J & J Leather Refinishers and Vijay Deodhar, 3D Infusion are positive role models for other small business owners, by demonstrating exemplary can-do customer service relationships in their business practices.

Each business was given an award from the Governor’s Office, presented by Governor Kulongoski during the morning opening activities. Cindy and Vijay went on to offer a workshop to their peers on how to succeed in business as a minority, woman or emerging small business owner. Their session offered tips and practical advice on networking, developing win-win relationships with government entities and others, and how to get that all important first contract. Evaluations from the event indicate the session was very helpful and attendees appreciated the insights they gained from Cindy and Vijay. The session was facilitated by Jonath Colon, Montesi & Associates.

"I want to say that this program is concise and right to the point. The presenters and contacts were very clear and helpful."

Changing Trends In Government Buying

OREGON Smart Buy — a project initiated by Governor Kulongoski and the State of Oregon, is a project dedicated to creating savings for Oregon taxpayers. The “Smart Buy” mission is “To identify and create sustainable cost savings through more effective purchasing practices while maintaining high-quality government services to the citizens of the state.”

More commonly known as strategic sourcing in corporate purchasing circles, the goal of the Smart Buy program is to reduce costs through volume purchasing of commonly used products and services. Strategies like reverse auctions, grouping “like commodities” for solicitations, and using multi-round competitive negotiations to select a vendor will help Department of Administrative Services buyers select bids and proposals most advantageous to the state.

Centralized contracting through the State’s Procurement Office in Salem will assist agencies and local governments in capturing the best possible pricing on many goods and services. To learn more about this new program log onto

http://tpps.das.state.or.us/purchasing/smart-buy/smart-menu.php#j
Business Bits and Pieces...

DiversityBusiness.com

The 2004 National Multicultural Business Conference will be held in Mashantucket, CT this year at the Foxwoods Resort Casino. The event offers training and networking for businesses of every type and size. The event will be held March 17 - 19 2004. Beginning on Thursday afternoon and moving through Friday morning the conference highlights issues in purchasing inclusive of government and corporate contracting. Small Business Owners (Suppliers) pay only $295 if registrations are received prior to January 31, 2004.

Attendees had a lot to say about this year’s Governor’s Marketplace Conference, most of it very good! Thank you!

"Lots of information not inconceivable to be 2-day event."
"Your design was excellent. If you think changes are needed, I trust you to make them."
"It was a good, useful day."

EMPLOYERS – Would you like to improve your bottom line?

Consider using the Preferred Worker Program when hiring new employees. Not only will you get dedicated employees, but you may also benefit from the following incentives:

· **Premium exemption**: For up to three years, a business can be exempt from paying workers’ compensation insurance premiums on a Preferred Worker.
· **Claim cost reimbursement**: The cost of any new injury claim that occurs during the premium exemption period can be reimbursed; workers’ compensation rates are not increased because of this injury.
· **Wage subsidy**: Half of the gross wages paid to a Preferred Worker during the first six months on the job can be reimbursed.
· **Obtained employment purchases**: The program may pay for items the employer does not provide and the worker is required to purchase for a job. Purchases may include tuition, books, and fees; tools and equipment; clothing; and moving expenses.

Washington Develops New Web Site for Vendors & Government Purchasing Professionals

The State of Washington recently launched a new web site for vendors wanting to do business with government. Known as WEBS, the site allows vendors to register on-line and receive bid and RFP notices via e-mail. The new service is free to vendors and users. "The goal of the system is access and opportunities, especially for small businesses," said the assistant Director for the General Administration’s Office of State Procurements.

The Agency goal is to register 10,000 vendors allowing the 650 participating state and local government agencies plenty of vendors to choose from when seeking goods and services.

To register log onto: [Http://www.ga.wa.gov/webs/](http://www.ga.wa.gov/webs/)
"Excellent program for price — thank you!"
"Great speakers and ideas."
"Keynote speaker... just superb."

New Model for Tracking MWESB Participation Being Studied By Willamette Intern

In 1995 the State of Oregon conducted a Disparity Study to determine if State purchasers were under-utilizing minority and women owned businesses. The study found that they were being under-utilized and that a centralized government tracking system would improve the ability to monitor the amount of minority and women owned business that the government contracts with. Unfortunately, finding the money for developing the program and the ability for the state to identify an appropriate location for the database were not easy problems to address at that time.

Beginning in July of 2003 Katie Crocker, a second year Graduate Student from Willamette University’s Atkinson Graduate School of Management, has been researching this area to discover options for this type of tracking model. Katie is working to identify the necessary information to be recorded, how it is to be verified and who it is to be made available to. To do this she has been meeting with officials at local agencies and speaking to officials from other states to research tracking systems currently being used.

Katie’s research has revealed that many state agencies currently track this information independently. Some states, such as California and Florida, have extensive tracking systems already in place; while some states are still in the process of commissioning disparity studies.

By researching these systems, the Advocate’s Office hopes to recommend a model that would increase the amount of available information to government agencies and others with an interest in developing diversity in state procurement practices. It is hoped that accurate tracking will assist minority and women owned businesses find avenues to successfully compete for contracts with Oregon’s government agencies.

Mary Jo Witty, Small Business Administration & Lydia Muñiz, Advocate to the Governor look on as business owners sign up to meet with state and local government buyers at the Governor’s Marketplace Conference.

"Teaming up for Business Success: Win-Win Strategies."
This year’s Governor’s Marketplace theme has already become a reality for small business owners that attended this year’s Marketplace. Oregon Lottery, one of the government agencies represented at the 22 Buyer One-on-One tables reports that they have entered into contracts with two small business vendors from this year’s Marketplace.

Twenty two tables were staffed by state and local government purchasing officers during the afternoon 1-on-1 coaching sessions, representing dozens of government offices. Information regarding upcoming bids and RFPs spanned everything from construction to IT projects. There was something for everyone as buyers and vendors matched contract needs with supplier capabilities. This truly was a win-win opportunity for attendees and government agencies alike.

In addition to the Buyer One-on-One Tables, there were 25 Exhibitor Tables with representatives that provided opportunities for attendees to learn about programs that help small business owners.

Business attendees at this year’s Governor’s Marketplace, in addition to the registered vendors; agency and local Buyer representatives, program representatives, and volunteers brought the total of all participants to over 325!

Danny Santos, Katie Crocker, Lydia Muñiz & Governor Kulongoski stop for photo. Katie, a Willamette student from the Atkinson Graduate School of Management is currently working on a certified firms contract tracking concept for the State of Oregon.
Women Business Owners: Growing in Numbers

Amazing things are happening in the world of business, women are becoming an economic force to be reckoned with in Oregon’s economy. As recently evidenced at the Governor’s Marketplace Conference in Beaverton, women are rapidly developing their business presence in all sectors of state, national and international commerce. Having witnessed the overwhelming turn out of businesses of every type owned by women who attended the event I was curious to see how Oregon stacked up against the national trend. This is what I found...

According to the Center for Women’s Business Research, there are an estimated 99,492 majority-owned, privately held woman owned firms in Oregon. That represents 32% of the privately held firms in the state. But wait! That does not account for the woman-minority owned businesses that add to the total number of woman-owned businesses significantly. Nationally, one in five woman-owned businesses is minority owned. Oregon ranks sixth in the nation in the growth of woman-owned businesses between 1997 and 2002, 8th in employment growth, and 17th is sales growth. The number of minority women-owned firms increased 31.5% between 1997 and 2002.

The Center for Women’s Business Research is the premier source of knowledge about women business owners and their enterprises worldwide.

Here in the west, Idaho and Montana, followed by North Dakota, South Dakota and Oklahoma represent the states with the most rapidly growing woman owned business population. Texas and California make an impact due to the high population density in those states. In the Pacific Northwest, Washington is making strides with 56% growth between 1997 and 2002. That equals three times the growth rate of all employer firms in the state. Woman owned firms in Washington employ 198,000 people generating over $23.3 billion in sales, while Oregon comes in at 148,000 employed at $16,000 billion in sales.

So what is the point? Women in the Pacific Northwest are a serious economic and political segment of the population to be considered when making decisions that impact small businesses. For example, if it is true that one in five woman-owned firms in the United States are minority owned; how will that shape the future of business and politics over the next few years? Current estimates are that there are over 470,000 Hispanic women-owned firms, over 365,000 African American women-owned firms, nearly 360,000 firms owned by

Asian or Pacific Islander women, and over 75,000 firms owned by Native American or Alaskan Native American Women in the United States.

When you compare the political and community activism of women-business owners the numbers are clear. Women tend to vote, support community programs, and participate in community activities at a higher level than their male counterparts. African American women-business owners top the list citing altruistic goals for business ownership. A full 83% state making a difference in their communities is a goal of business ownership. Asian and African American list being role models as a top priority, while Caucasian and Latina women are more centered in employment and increased revenue goals for their businesses.

No matter how you slice it, women are changing the face of business in America. Oregon, often seen as a national trendsetter, is doing well in spite of economic setbacks and a much smaller population than their other western counterparts have. Today the Advocate’s Office continues to receive numerous requests for information on starting businesses, gaining access to business loans and training for women-owned business enterprises. We at the Governor’s Office applaud those efforts and will continue to support those pursuing the goals of ownership in a business. For more information please visit the following web sites: WWW.womensbusinessresearch.org — this site has links to the following sites and so much more

www.bpwusa.org     www.nawbo.org
www.onlinewbc.gov/  www.womenbiz.gov/
www.wbenc.org/      www.womenscalendar.org

Lisa Williams & Rosie Bockowski representing Multnomah County speak with women business owners about contract opportunities at the Governor’s Marketplace Conference held November 6th, 2003.
Office of the Advocate for Minority, Women & Emerging Small Businesses

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http://www.hr.das.state.or.us/minority/

Sustainability:
It’s Your Business

Think green; green forests, green buildings and products, green purchasing practices and your bottom line will move from red to green. Supported by state and local government, sustainable products will capture a considerable share of the government market in coming years. Executive Order 03-03 mandates that Oregon tax dollars will be spent on sustainable products. “I believe that to meet the challenges we face today it is essential to engage businesses, government, non-profit organizations and citizens in collective action.” Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski

This quote by Governor Kulongoski is a wake up call to all businesses, that green business will be good business in the future. Purchasing for sustainability means giving consideration to the environment, economy and community in which a product or service will be used. Construction projects and goods will be purchased based on lowest possible life cycle cost compared to the highest possible efficiency. Environmentally friendly products will be the products of choice in Oregon.

Is your business green enough to compete for public contracts in the future? To learn what others are doing to find success in a sustainable business environment visit these web-sites:

Http://sustainableoregon.net/oregon/index.cfm http://www.oregonsolutions.net/casestudies/more.cfm

A Marketplace and clearinghouse of ideas and business opportunities.

Workers’ Compensation Educational Conference

May 24–25
Time: 5/24 8:00 am to 5:00pm
5/25 7:30am to 5:00 pm
Location: Portland Downtown Marriott
1401 SW Naito Parkway

This two day event is intended to educate the workers’ compensation community regarding issues of injured worker benefits and facilitating a return to work for injured workers. If you are an employer, representative of injured workers, insurance professional, medical service provider or vocational and rehabilitation professional this conference is for you. Workshops will be offered in tracks specifically designed for professional groups in attendance. Continuing Education Hours will be given to support professional certification requirements for many of the attendees. Information booths will also be open to allow attendees to learn about industry related services, equipment and materials.

For more information log onto: www.oregonwed.org or contact Nameun House at nameun.house@state.or.us
Phone: 503-947-7515

Each year people visit the Capitol to enjoy the decorations and hear hundreds of school children play music and sing for parents and visitors.