

# Newsline

A Monthly Newsletter from the San Diego District Office



Volume 2 Issue 8

## Training Calendar

A list of events from SBA and our resource partners: SCORE and the SBDC may be found at [www.sba.gov/ca/sandiego](http://www.sba.gov/ca/sandiego) under Training Calendar.

**September 19 – Franchising: How to Choose and Buy the Right Franchise for You** presented by SCORE in San Diego, CA.

**September 26 – Spice Up Your Recipe for Success for New or Startup Restaurant Owners** presented by the IVSBDC in El Centro, CA.

**September 27 – SBA Certification Programs** presented by the SBA in San Diego, CA.

**October 12– Marketing for Business Owners** presented by the NCSBDC in Oceanside, CA.

**October 19 – IRS Tax Workshop** presented by the SBDITC in Chula Vista, CA.

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## SBA and NLBWA Sign Strategic Alliance Memorandum



Front Row (L to R): Dr. Ruben R. Garcia, District Director, San Diego SBA & Therese Cisneros-Remington, President, NLBWA-San Diego. Back Row (L to R): Rosa Rodarte, SBA; Cynthia Harris, SBA; Brenda Vergara, NLBWA; and Gabriela Misirlioglu, NLBWA

Dr. Ruben Garcia, district director of the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) San Diego district office, signed a strategic alliance with Therese Cisneros-Remington, president of the **National Latina Business Women Association of San Diego (NLBWA-SD)**.

The signed agreement is expected to allow SBA and NLBWA-SD to work together to improve Latina business access to technological information through educational opportunities and SBA resources; providing maximum financial opportunities and training to Latina women entrepreneurs.

"I am extremely pleased with the work that is being accomplished by the National Latina Business Women Association – San Diego (NLBWA-SD) and their excellent leadership through Ms. Cisneros-Remington," said Dr. Garcia. "Therese is dedicated to helping Latina women take their place as business owners and I know that she will do a great job of assisting the potential woman entrepreneur to fulfill her dream of small business ownership."

This is the second such alliance established under Garcia's administration. Since Latina ownership is

the fastest growing market in the United States, the need for support and services continues to grow as well. This collaboration between the SBA and NLBWA-SD is building a strong foundation for the future. Small business is the golden thread that ties the American dream into reality for many. The Latino consumer is spending millions each year and business leaders are rushing to meet that demand. Therese Cisneros-Remington said "Having the SBA of San Diego as a Strategic Alliance partner only enhances a strong

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## Surety Bond Guarantee Program Opens Doors to New Opportunities

Small business contractors and service companies that want to become more competitive and bid on projects requiring surety bonds, can look to the U.S. Small Business Administration for the help they need to step up to that next level of business success.

The Miller Act of 1935 requires surety bonds on federally-funded construction projects in excess of \$100,000. Today, virtually all states have their own statutes and now almost every public construction project across the country requires surety bonds.

The SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program can help small business contractors and manufacturers overcome challenges they face in winning government contracts and private-sector contracts, and in the process help them get that next bond and contract.

The idea behind surety bonding is simple and direct. One

person, or entity, guarantees to another that a third person will perform a contract according to its terms.

Half of all construction firms in business today, however, will not be in business six years from now, according to the Associated General Contractors, a construction industry trade association. An economic downturn, labor difficulties, material shortages, the death of a key employee, equipment problems, bad weather, even fraud, can bring a project to a standstill, often causing the contractor to default and bills to go unpaid.

When a government entity awards a construction project to the lowest bidder, it knows that the surety bond company stands behind the contractor's promise to complete the job according to the owner's specifications and terms of the contract. Often, however, new and small businesses may not be able to obtain bonds through regular commercial channels.

Under the SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program the SBA guarantees surety companies against a percentage of the losses sustained as a result of a contractor's default on a guaranteed bid, payment or performance bond, making them more willing to issue bonds for smaller, newer companies. The SBA can guarantee bid, payment and performance bonds for construction, service, and supply contracts up to \$2 million for eligible small contractors.

The overall SBA program consists of the Prior Approval Program and the Preferred Surety Bond Program. Under the Prior Approval Program, the SBA provides sureties an 80 or 90 percent guarantee to issue bonds on behalf of small businesses, and the surety must obtain SBA's prior approval for each bond. SBA guarantees 90 percent for bonds on contracts up to \$100,000, and on bonds for socially and economically disadvantaged contractors. Certified HUBZone contractors

are eligible for the 90 percent guarantee under the Prior Approval Program.

Under the Preferred Surety Bond Program, selected sureties receive a 70 percent bond guarantee and are authorized to issue, service and monitor bonds without the SBA's prior approval.

Using the SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program can open up more business opportunities for small businesses. It could pave the way to obtaining a federal, state, county, municipal or private-sector contract, and another, and another, and another.

Additional information on the Surety Bond Guarantee program is available online at [www.sba.gov/osg](http://www.sba.gov/osg). You may also contact Julie Talley at the SBA San Diego District Office by telephone at (619) 557-7250 ext. 1120 for additional information or to obtain a list of local surety agents.

## SBA San Diego District Office—ExCel All Star Award Winners

Dr. Ruben Garcia presented two employees with ExCel All Star Awards in September to recognize their contributions in the San Diego District office. Richard "Rick" Blum and Bonnie Valentine, both Business Development Specialists, were presented with the quarterly Excel All Star Award.

Blum was recognized for his achievements this year in substantially increasing outreach activities for the district's faith based initiatives while also providing excellent support to the office in the area of information technology.

Valentine, who also serves as Administrative Officer for the office, was awarded for her efforts in maximizing expenditures from the district's limited operating budget and for her success and innovation in obtaining additional

operating funds for the district.

The ExCel All Star Award is presented to employees in the SBA San Diego District Office on a quarterly basis to recognize employees for excellence in their work.



**Richard "Rick" G. Blum**  
Business Development Specialist



**Bonnie M. Valentine**  
Business Development Specialist

## NLBWA

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foundation of services for future Latina entrepreneurs".

To learn more about the Small Business Administration call (619) 557-7250 or visit us on the Internet at [www.sba.gov/ca/sandiego](http://www.sba.gov/ca/sandiego). To find out more about the National Latina Business Women Association of San Diego visit their website at [www.nlbwa-sd.com](http://www.nlbwa-sd.com) or call Therese Cisneros-Remington at (619) 889-7642.

## Ask SCORE for Business Advice

By Mark Thompson  
Counselor, SCORE San Diego

*Question: My company currently has a web site, which I created myself, that needs to be updated by a professional. I would like the web site to present my business in a manner which differentiates my business from others and in a professional way. Any thoughts on how to start with a web design company?*

**Answer:** Congratulations on recognizing the value of keeping a website current. The industry, or should I say the technology, seems to advance daily with blogging, RSS, XML, and the like. My easy answer to your question of "expectations" is to address what NOT to expect from a design firm. That, is "the clarity of your business strategy".

I have learned to think about the website design/re-design in three areas: 1) creativity in design & communication; 2) technological development & functionality; and 3) **business strategy.**

**You** need to create the business strategy for the site,

the vision or the intended outcome from a potential client. Then let the designer and developer have at it. The strategy should be built from your desired position within your competitive set and your competitive competencies (experience, longevity, ethnic diversity, affordability, government endorsement, etc). If you can find a small-medium size website firm that offers strategic and competitive insights (beyond keywords) then you have found a rare commodity.

You should expect your chosen firm's graphic designer to excel in visual and written communication and to develop an easy and intuitive navigation system.

You can expect the development side of the project to deliver cutting edge options regarding behind the scene features like database options, shopping carts, and content management. They should also act in an advisory way to ensure you are planning for future flexibility in functionality or applications. As you probably know, web platforms, e-commerce, and e-communications are complex already. There is no realistic way to anticipate all of your

future needs but you should try to plan ahead where appropriate (webinars, podcasts, RSS feeds etc.).

It is your job to provide the content, the message, and the proper persuasion in the right proportion so the designer and developer can write about it and build it. Many small-medium size web firms can help in the copy writing area but seldom in the area of the area of content. If you think about it, no one should know more than you about your business anyway.

It's been said before that the greatest graphics, fancy words, interactivity or entertainment can't make up for bad site content. So make your site as valuable as possible – communicate with them as if you were face to face.

Web professionals are experts in the communication arena. If your intended message is solid; they can present

it through graphics, words, fonts, color schemes, layout, etc. Your ability to use this medium competitively and effectively is likely to, in one way or another, validate and enhance your perception and value in the marketplace, thereby increasing revenues.

As you look forward, your web platform will likely become the primary contact point for you and your clients – current and new. You want to strengthen your relationships, experiences and earn return visits from these people. Your long term return on this investment is a big part of inventing your future, as well as providing for today.

Ask SCORE your question. Email [sd.score@sba.gov](mailto:sd.score@sba.gov) or visit SCORE's website at [www.score-sandiego.org](http://www.score-sandiego.org). We answer all emails and select questions will be used in future editions.

**SCORE**<sup>®</sup>  
Counselors to America's Small Business

## Events Around San Diego



**U.S. Small Business Administration**



**Your Small Business Resource**

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The U. S. Small Business Administration was created in 1953 to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting, and protecting the interests of small businesses and by helping families and businesses recover from national disasters.

SBA's San Diego District Office is your small business resource for access to capital, counseling services, training, and government contracting opportunities, to help start or grow a small business in San Diego and Imperial counties. Our programs and services are delivered through participating lenders and our resource partners, SCORE: Counselors to America's Small Businesses, the Small Business Development Center, and the Women's Business Center.

Newsline is produced by the U. S. Small Business Administration's San Diego District Office. Subscribe to Newsline by registering online at [web.sba.gov/list](http://web.sba.gov/list). Look for San Diego News.

## San Diego District Office Fiscal Year 2006—Year to Date Activity

October 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006

	Number of Loans	Dollar Amount
<b>7(a) Loans</b>	1,212	\$222,128,000
<b>504 Loans</b>	164	\$100,279,000
<b>Total</b>	1,376	\$322,407,000

Bank of America, NA	185	\$6,227,000
Wells Fargo Bank, NA	128	\$18,389,900
Union Bank of California, NA	108	\$2,778,600
CDC Small Business Finance Corporation	107	\$65,553,000
U.S. Bank, NA	86	\$9,824,000
Business Loan Center, LLC	84	\$8,884,000
Washington Mutual Bank	73	\$1,917,700
Capital One, FSB	67	\$2,750,000
California Bank & Trust	64	\$5,111,200
EDF Resource Capital, Inc.	36	\$20,791,000

The San Diego District Office year-to-date has provided approximately 18,613 clients with counseling assistance and training through the assistance of our Resource Partners, SCORE: *Counselors to America's Small Business*, the Small Business Development Center Network of San Diego and Imperial Counties, and the Women's Business Center of California. Additionally, we made 429 8(a) contracts, including modifications, worth \$30,703,048 year-to-date.