

## Building the Fresno Community, One House at a Time

In December, Allright Diversified's CEO, Olga Martinez was home sick with the flu and like any entrepreneur, she was in bed with her laptop "not working" when she saw on the news that ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition would be coming to Fresno, CA. Since Allright is a construction company, Ms. Martinez immediately decided to become a sponsor and partner for the project. What's most unique about this project is the build must be completed in seven days and all products and services must be donated.

"Allright is committed to making a difference in our community — after all, the community is a tribute to our success as a company," said Ms. Martinez. "We were so pleased to do whatever was asked of us, it was such a blessing to be able to make a contribution to a family in need."

The recipient of this episode of Extreme Makeover: Home Edition was Mary Ann Riojas. Born without legs and only one fully developed arm, Ms. Riojas was no stranger to adversity. She was placed in foster care at an early age and grew up in poverty and an unstable household. After getting married and having four children, Mary Ann struggled financially and found herself on welfare.

Unfortunately, her own home was ill-equipped to serve her physical challenges and had led to many serious physical injuries. Mary Ann's children were concerned about their mother's care and safety, especially when she's home alone. Despite its challenges, Mary Ann's home is nonetheless a source of great pride to her. After seven days and more than



3,800 volunteers — including those from Allright Diversified — Mary Ann and her four children, Nichole (18), Victoria (17), Angel (15) and Jessie (14) have a beautiful new home where they can live safely and create memories to last a lifetime.

"Mary Ann and her family are true heroes in our community and it is because of this that Allright Diversified participated in ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," adds Ms. Martinez.

Since becoming a client of MBDA's Los Angeles minority business center in 2004, Allright Diversified has received assistance with marketing and certifications — in addition MBDA has guided the firm to more than \$18 million dollars in contracts and procurement opportunities. As a result, more than a dozen jobs were created at Allright, and countless more with sub-contractors working with the company.

## Legislative Corner

### Bills to Watch

**Re-Build America Bonds:** On Wednesday, February 4, Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) introduced **H.R. 852**, a bill that would authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to issue Re-Build America Bonds to finance essential infrastructure projects.

**Access to Capital:** On Thursday, March 12, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) introduced **H.R. 1479**, a bill to enhance the availability of capital, credit and other financial services and to ensure that community reinvestment requirements are updated to account for changes in the financial industry.

**New Markets Venture Capital:** On Thursday, March 12, Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI) introduced **H.R. 1491**, a bill to reauthorize and expand the New Markets Venture Capital Program.

**Start-Up Expenditures:** On Tuesday, March 17, Rep. Frank Kratovil (D-MD) introduced **H.R. 1551**, a bill to increase the amount allowed as a deduction for start-up expenditures.

**Native American Economic Development:** On Thursday, March 19, Delegate Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa) introduced **H.R. 1607**, a bill to provide for and promote the economic development of Indian tribes by furnishing the necessary capital, financial services and technical assistance to Indian-owned business enterprises and to stimulate the development of the private sector of Indian tribal economies. This is the companion bill to **S. 439** introduced by Senator Inouye (D-HI).