

The Advocate

Volume 8, Issue 2



June 2009

Governor's Office Advocate for Minority, Women & Emerging Small Businesses

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Dates of Interest

- 6/21—Summer Solstice
- 7/4—Independence Day
- 9/7—Labor Day



Mission Statement:
To advocate for and promote programs to improve government business opportunities for minority, women and emerging small businesses.

Advocate's Message



Lydia Muñiz,
Governor's Advocate MWESB

Happy summer everyone; as business owners it is important to stay up to date on issues that may impact you. Below is a list of legislative bills that have already been signed or that are still moving within the legislative process. A reminder that activity is fast paced these last few days of the legislative session. We will continue to keep you updated as we get information.

Bills that have passed the state House and Senate chambers and are then signed by the Governor become new laws. Two have recently been signed by Governor Kulongoski. All new laws, unless given

a specific date, take effect on January 1, 2010.

House Bill 2731 was signed into law on May 26, 2009. This new law provides strict timelines for appeals by contractors if they receive notice of disqualification, denial, revocation or revision of a prequalification.

Senate Bill 479 was signed by the Governor on June 6, 2009 and takes effect immediately. It amends ORS 279A.100 to include "disabled veterans" to programs designed to ensure equal opportunity in employment and business. The disabled veteran status joins others that are considered "disadvantaged" by such

characteristics as "race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or physical or mental disability."

As reported in our last issue, SB 895 would create a Construction Diversity Oversight Board and establish a Construction Diversity Oversight Fund to support the work of the Board. The Board would have many objectives, one of which would be to "recommend goals for representation of women and members of minority groups and utilization of apprentices in the construction industry workforce." This bill has moved forward, but has not had a final vote in either chamber as of our print date.



Photo courtesy of Torivio Garcia

Business Highlight



Michael Stewart
Stewart Marketing Group

Stewart Marketing Group is owned and operated by Michael Stewart. The Portland company is a marketing firm that helps other companies position their "brand and image" to their clients and customers. Michael markets and sells over 700,000 products. "Businesses that have an upcoming sales meeting, trade show, product launch or campaign message are perfect fits," he tells us.

After 30 years of working in Corporate America and living on airplanes, Michael decided "the time to try it on my own just felt right." He appreciates being 100% in control of his time

and "how to best use it." The most difficult hurdle has been "the paperwork and data entry requirements to be visible to large corporate clients" which is "significant and very time consuming."

Tips from Michael include:

1. Don't try to be all things to all people. Pick a niche or customer group and focus your efforts.
2. Metrics are important. Be able to benchmark your progress relative to your written goals on a weekly basis.
3. If you own your own business and it feels like work, you are doing it wrong.

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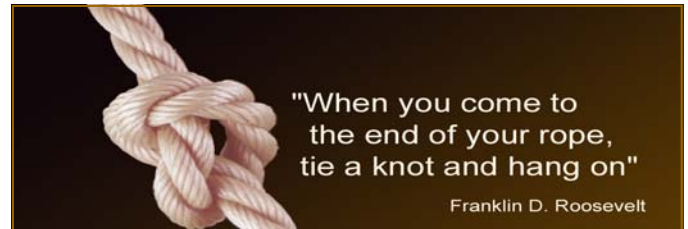
Working with MWESB

Government agencies are encouraged to consider minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses in contracting needs. The Governor's Advocate for Minority, Women and Emerging Small Businesses works with agencies to encourage inclusion of these businesses by monitoring state contracts. Executive Order 08-16 directs eleven state agencies to set aspirational targets and report on contracts with state certified minority and women owned businesses. Although it's still early in the calendar year, two agencies have reported that approximately 18% of their total contracts to date have gone to M/W certified firms. We applaud those agencies: ODOT and Employment Department.

We realize that there are more M/W firms in some contracting areas than in others making it easier for agencies to outreach to certified firms. We also recognize that it is more difficult for small businesses to compete with larger ones. Insurance, bonding, cash flow and number of employees influence bidding. Aspirational targets are voluntary in nature. However, we appreciate state agencies' efforts and commitment to invite, notify and include Oregon's small businesses.



Photo courtesy of Torivio Garcia



Layoff Alternatives

If you are a small business owner with employees and the current recession has you thinking about laying off your employees, the Work Share Program through the Employment Department may be for you. Pros and cons should be considered before applying for this program, but it may be a useful tool for your business.

Work Share is a program that offers an alternative to laying off a work force. It allows owners to keep skilled employees during slow times by reducing work hours. Eligible staff whose hours and wages are reduced receive a portion of their regular unemployment insurance benefits to compensate for the lost wages.

Under the Work Share program, the work week of staff is reduced by 20% to 40% percent. Workers who qualify for unemployment insurance benefits receive both wages and Work Share benefits. Workers receive a percentage of Unemployment Insurance benefits equal to the percentage of the reduction in their work week.

For more information on the program and eligibility conditions visit:

www.oregon.gov/EMPLOY/UI/EMPLOYER/Work_Share_Updated.shtml

or call a Department Work Share representative at 503-947-1649 (in Salem), or toll free at 1-800-237-3710, extension 71649.



Business Highlight

Pacificmark Construction Corp. (Portland) completes all phases of residential, commercial and institutional building construction. Included is framing, drywall, finish carpentry, painting, wall covering, siding, doors, bath, cabinetry, etc.

“The love of construction and satisfaction I get seeing owners happy with my work,” is what prompted Mark Matthews to get into business for himself. As with most small and beginning companies, his most difficult hurdle has been bonding capacity and working capital. Both are critical components in construction.

When asked what has been most rewarding about being your own boss, Mark answered, “Freedom to choose the projects I love to do.”

Words of Wisdom include:

1. Remain determined to succeed if/when times are difficult.
2. Focus on your strengths and strive to improve on your weaknesses.
3. Build relationships in the construction arena and your community.

Contact information:

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No “Free” Money

The Governor’s Advocate’s Office receives requests for information about grant money on a daily basis. These queries come from all over the United States as well as from Oregon.

When people use the term “grant” they think of money that does not have to be paid back. “If I only had \$50,000 seed money, my business would take off,” we’ve heard. While access to cash is important for managing and maintaining a small business, the state does not offer “free” money.

There are, however, a variety of business assistance programs through the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department (OECD) and through the Small Business Administration (SBA). See below websites for further information.

Knowing when to go into debt to start or expand your business requires researching all available avenues. If something sounds too good to be true like “government giving away free money,” it probably is. Do your homework.

Visit OECD:

<http://www.oregon4biz.com/smbiz.htm>

Visit SBA:

<http://www.sba.gov/services/index.html>

SBA Awards

On May 28, the Small Business Administration (SBA), with the help of many corporate sponsors, presented awards to various Oregon businesses and financial institutions at an event at the Oregon Convention Center. Lydia Muñiz, the Governor’s Advocate MWESB, read the Governor’s Proclamation declaring Small Business Week and honoring Oregon’s businesses.

Keynote speaker was Tedde McMillen, Co-Founder of Oregon Chai (a tea drink) and author of *Million Dollar Cup of Tea*. During the company’s struggle, an SBA guaranteed loan helped the company move to the next level. Oregon Chai is now a multimillion dollar operation. One key piece of advice she offered was the importance of adaptability. Especially in these trying economic times, it is important for businesses to be able to adapt. This could mean packaging, advertising, streamlining, etc. Award winner Gert Boyle (Columbia Sportswear) offered the crowd the following advice, “Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise.”

Award winners include the following:

Gert Boyle, Founder, Chairman of the Board, Columbia Sportswear – Director’s 2009 Impact Award.

Tara O’Keeffe-Broadbent, President and Founder, O’Keeffe’s Company – 2009 SBA Small Business Person of the Year

Mary Merrill, Director, Columbia Gorge Community College SBDC – Small Business Development Center Award

Lydia Muñiz, Governor’s Advocate MWESB – Minority Small Business Champion

Rodger Nichols, Journalist, *The Dalles Chronicle*, Small Business Journalist of the year

Diane McClelland, President and CEO, Astra Women’s Business Alliance – Women in Business Champion

Randy Montalbano, Contract Specialist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Veteran Small Business Champion

Thomas Knox, Vice-President, People’s Bank of Commerce – Financial Services Champion.



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Upcoming Events

September 10 — Hispanic Heritage Month Program. Oregon Convention Center, 6—9 p.m.
<http://www.hmccoregon.com/events/>

September 20 — 15th Annual Oregon Small Business Fair. 8:45-4:30. Free admission.
Oregon Convention Center, 9 a.m. -4:30 p.m. (503)329-4260.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/smallbusinessfair/>

September 30 — MED Week Training, Reverse Vendor Networking and Luncheon. \$85.
Oregon Convention Center, 9-2 p.m. <http://www.bdiweb.org>

October 9 — Oregon Native American Chamber 5th Annual Gathering. (Yes, it's on a Friday this year.)
For more information on time and place, check ONACC's website: www.onacc.org/index.htm

October 24 — Latino Small Business Conference. Chemeketa Community College, Salem. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
For more information: Epinter@aol.com

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Governor's Advocate MWESB Website: <http://www.oregon.gov/Gov/MWESB/index.shtml>