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Minority Business Development Agency Announces \$6.6 Million Investment in Indian Country to Create Jobs and Support Businesses

AK, CA, NM, ND and OK Receive Federal Funds

Washington, DC (September 14, 2012) — The U.S. Department of Commerce today announced the winners of a grant competition to spur job creation and economic development in states with large American Indian and Alaska Native populations. Approximately \$6.6 million in Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) funds is being invested with local entities to operate new MBDA Business Centers in Anchorage, Alaska; Fresno, California; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Bismarck, North Dakota; and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"Today's announcement builds upon the Obama administration's commitment to economic growth and job creation in Indian Country," said Acting U.S. Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank. "The new MBDA Business Centers will provide minority entrepreneurs and businesses with the expertise and tools they need to compete globally and create good paying jobs in America."

The primary objective of the MBDA Business Centers is to provide strategic business consulting services to minority-owned firms that will result in the creation and retention of jobs for Americans through business growth. This is accomplished by increasing the domestic and global competitiveness of minority-owned firms in accessing contracts, capital and markets.

"Under the leadership of President Obama, MBDA has achieved new heights in serving the minority business community," said MBDA National Director David A. Hinson. "Since 2009, MBDA has facilitated nearly \$12 billion in contracts and capital for minority-owned firms and we have expanded our footprint to new locations by streamlining our administrative operations."

The following entities will receive federal funds over a five-year period to operate an MBDA Business Center:

- Alaska: Native American Contractors Association, \$1,275,000
- California: Asian, Inc., \$1,500,000
- New Mexico: American Indian Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico, \$1,275,000
- North Dakota: United Tribes Technical College \$1,275,000
- Oklahoma: Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma, Inc., \$1,275,000

Anchorage, Alaska; Fresno, California; and Santa Fe, New Mexico, are new geographic locations for MBDA and were selected to serve the high concentration of American Indian and Alaska Native firms in the area. By expanding the MBDA footprint, more minority-owned firms will have access to MBDA and its portfolio of strategic partners in the public and private sector.

The introduction of these five new MBDA Business Centers completes the Agency's recent effort to phase-out its three distinct business center grant programs and replace them with one consolidated, redesigned MBDA Business Center program, first introduced in 2011. Under the redesigned program, the centers in these locations are expected to address the unique economic challenges and opportunities in Indian Country and Native Alaska while also serving other minority-owned firms in the state and surrounding area. The redesigned MBDA Business Center program also eliminated geographic boundaries so the distinct expertise of these former Native American Business Enterprise Centers can be accessed by minority business owners from anywhere in the country.

A complete listing of all MBDA Business Centers, their unique capabilities and contact information can be found at www.mbda.gov.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, promotes the growth and global competitiveness of the minority business community, making them better equipped to create jobs, impact local economies, and compete successfully in domestic and global marketplaces. With a nationwide network of 40 business centers and a rich portfolio of strategic partners, MBDA assists minority entrepreneurs and business owners with consulting services, contract and financing opportunities, bonding and certification services, building business-to-business alliances and executive training.

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