

NWBC Appears Before Senate Committee on Council Reauthorization

The triennial process for reauthorizing the National Women's Business Council is underway in Congress. At a roundtable meeting held April 9, Council Chair Marilyn Carlson Nelson spoke before the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship commenting on the Council's mission, current activities and future plans.

Carlson Nelson discussed her vision for the Council, which includes her goal that the Council will come to be widely regarded as:

- A trusted source of fact-based information for public policy change;
- A connective force for the women's business community; and
- A leading and respected advocate for the women's business community.

Regarding the Council's reauthorization, Carlson Nelson requested clarification on several points and a few minor changes. In particular, the

Council is asking for further definition regarding how organizational members are appointed. The language is unclear with respect to transitions. As a result, if an organizational member leaves their position during their term on the Council, the Council has not been able to replace that member with another individual from the same organization to serve out the term. To resolve this, the Council is requesting that its statutory authority be clarified in a manner that asserts the importance of the organization as the effective member of the Council rather than the person representing the organization.

The Council also requested that the budget allocation earmarked for research be changed to a percentage of the total budget rather than an exact dollar amount, to better reflect the intent to earmark a majority of funds for research.

Further, Carlson Nelson suggested
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Organization of the Month:

The Online Women's Business Center, Hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Women's Business Ownership

Entrepreneurs worldwide who would like information about starting or growing their small businesses in Arabic, Chinese, Icelandic, Japanese, Russian or Spanish - in addition to English - can find it at www.onlinewbc.gov, an online women's business center hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Women's Business Ownership.

The translation of business start-up information and the directory of small business resources was a joint effort of the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership and Office of International Trade in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

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Council Names Six New Members

The National Women's Business Council recently announced the appointment of six new members:

- **Dr. Marsha Firestone**, Founder and President of the Women Presidents' Organization (WPO);
- **Jean Johnson**, President and CEO, LegalWATCH
- **Laurie McDonald Jonsson**, President and CEO of Stellar International; Chairman, CEO and Owner of Stellar Travel; Co-Owner and Board Member of Stellar International Holdings; and, Owner, M-W Farms;
- **Karen Kerrigan**, President and CEO of Women Entrepreneurs, Inc. (WE Inc.);
- **Claudia T. Laird**, Vice President at Ability Center and an owner of LIDCO, Inc.; and,
- **Sheri L. Orlowitz**, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Shan Industries, LLC; Founder and Owner of OrloVon, LLC.

"As recognized leaders in the women's business community, these women will be tremendous assets to the Council," said Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies and Chair of the National Women's Business Council. "Their vast experience and knowledge will provide important perspectives and will help inform the Council's recommendations for policies and programs that encourage women's entrepreneurship. I look forward to working with them and appreciate their willingness to serve."

Dr. Marsha Firestone founded the Women Presidents' Organization in 1996 to serve as a peer networking organization for women whose businesses annually gross over two million dollars. The WPO currently operates in 30 locations nationwide and in Canada. Dr. Firestone has also served as Vice President of Women Incorporated and previously as Vice President of Training and Counseling at the American Woman's Economic Development Corporation (AWED).

Jean Johnson formed LegalWATCH, a preventive law company, in 1997. LegalWATCH's signature Preventive Law 101 training program trains executives, managers and front-line employees on ways to reduce risk and liability associated with their actions and communications, including email. Johnson has conducted numerous training courses, spearheaded governmental audits, designed compliance programs and negotiated settlements with third parties and governmental regulators across the U.S.

Laurie McDonald Jonsson has combined a successful travel and business career with her personal commitment to global women's leadership. One of the first women in the cruise ship business, she managed and directed complex operations
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Dr. Marsha Firestone,
Founder and President,
Women Presidents'
Organization



Jean Johnson,
President and CEO,
LegalWATCH



**Laurie McDonald
Jonsson**, President and
CEO, Stellar International



Karen Kerrigan,
President and CEO,
Women
Entrepreneurs, Inc.



Claudia T. Laird, Vice
President, Ability Center
and an owner of
LIDCO, Inc



Sheri L. Orlowitz,
Founder, Chairman & CEO,
Shan Industries, LLC;
Founder & Owner,
OrloVon, LLC

Six New Council Members, Cont.

from negotiating and supervising ship construction to overseeing all aspects of the business. She now owns Stellar Travel, which specializes in cruise ship travel. She also owns Stellar International, a successful investment company focusing on a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures.

A well-known small business advocate, **Karen Kerrigan** is President and CEO of Women Entrepreneurs, Inc. (WE Inc.), an association whose purpose is to help women entrepreneurs succeed through networking, educational programs and advocacy. Kerrigan also founded the Small Business Survival Committee in 1994, a prominent small business advocacy organization with more than 70,000 members. She now serves as the group's Chairman.

Claudia Laird is Vice President at Ability Center, the West Coast's largest mobility company with its "One Stop Shop" concept offering a full line of accessible vans, wheelchairs, adaptive driving equipment and home medical supplies. She is also a Past President of the National Association of Women Business Owners in California. Laird is also an owner and former Chief Operating Officer of LIDCO, Inc., a subsurface drainage pipe manufacturing and construction company with over 100 employees in the U.S. and Mexico.

Sheri L.Orlowitz is Founder, Principal Owner, Chairman and CEO of Shan Industries, LLC, and Founder and Owner of OrloVon, LLC, a real estate development company in Washington, DC. Shan Industries, LLC is one of the only majority women-owned holding companies that acquires and operates manufacturing companies. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., Shan currently operates two divisions: Thermodynamics, a rotational molding company which operates facilities in Oklahoma and Georgia; and Accurate Forming, a metal stamping company operating in New Jersey.

Women's Business Connection...

*a business issues conference call
brought to you by the
National Women's Business Council*

June Topic: Homeland Security Preparedness and Procurement Opportunities

Guest Speakers: **Janet Hale**, Under Secretary for Management, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and **Alfonso Martinez-Fonts, Jr.**, Special Assistant to the Secretary for Private Sector Liaison, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2003,
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EDT

How to Join: Participants may join the call by dialing **1-877-326-2337** (toll free) and entering code **#3687613**.

"Women's Business Connection" is always on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:00 PM Eastern Time; we encourage you to join us regularly!

Business Matchmaking Events Prove Highly Successful

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Hewlett Packard and U.S. Small Business Administration are hosting several business matchmaking events across the country. These events provide a unique opportunity for small business owners to present product and service solutions to buyers through prescheduled one-on-one appointments with procurement managers. Women business owners are encouraged to register early to ensure a spot at the event. A schedule of these events and registration is available through the Chamber's Web site at www.uschamber.com/events/matchmaking/default. Buyers participate for free. The event fee for small businesses is \$125 per business. For further information about this program, contact Arlene DiBenigno at 202-619-1631.

Quote of the Month

"One of my top priorities in Congress is to ensure that the voice of small business, including minority-owned businesses, is heard. They are the backbone of the American economy, and women, especially Latinas, are opening businesses in record numbers today. There is still much work to be done, but I know that they are our future and I will continue to fight for them."

Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), after being named Hispanic Woman of the Year by *Hispanic Business Magazine*.

Council Members Inducted Into "Enterprising Women" Hall of Fame

"Enterprising Women," a magazine for women business owners, recently hosted a reception in New York City to honor outstanding women business owners and leaders in the women's business community. Seven women were inducted into the "Enterprising Women" Hall of Fame in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments and significant contributions to advancing the growth and development of women's business enterprises. The 2003 inductees included current Council members **Marilyn Carlson Nelson**, Chair of the National Women's Business Council and Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies, Inc.; **Susan Phillips Bari**, President of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC); and **Marsha Firestone**, Founder and President of the Women Presidents' Organization (WPO); as well as former Council member **Hedy Ratner**, Co-Founder and Co-President of the Women's Business Development Center. Also honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award was former Council Chair **Kay Koplovitz**.



Inductees into the 2003 "Enterprising Women" Hall of Fame included: (seated, left to right) Susan Phillips Bari, Marsha Firestone, and (standing, left to right) Sharon Hadary, Edie Fraser, Hedy Ratner and Carol Dougal (inductee Marilyn Carlson Nelson not pictured)

Upcoming NWBC Research

- The Existence and Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs for Women in Business, July 2003
- Enterprising Women, Yesterday and Today: An Issues Discussion, October 2003
- Trends in the Growth of Women-Owned Employer Firms, Fall 2003

Council Members

Chair

Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and CEO
Carlson Companies, Inc.

Jean Johnson, President and CEO
LegalWATCH

Laurie McDonald Jonsson, President and CEO
Stellar International

Karen Kerrigan, President and CEO
Women Entrepreneurs, Inc.

Claudia Laird, Vice President, Ability Center,
and an owner of LIDCO, Inc.

Terry Neese, President
Terry Neese Personnel Services

Sheri Orlowitz, Founder, Chairman and CEO,
Shan Industries, LLC; Founder and Owner,
OrloVon, LLC

Annie Presley, Principal and Owner
The McKellar Group, Inc.

Women's Business Organizations

Agnes Noonan, National Board
Association of Women's Business Centers

Whitney Johns Martin, Past President
National Association of Women Business Owners

Dr. Lydia Mallet, Past President
National Coalition of 100 Black Women

Elizabeth Lisboa-Farrow, Immediate Past Chair
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Marsha Firestone, Founder and President
Women Presidents' Organization

Susan Bari, President
Women's Business Enterprise National Council

Council Reauthorization, cont.

that an additional research responsibility be added to the Council's statutory authority: an annual publication entitled "State of Women's Enterprise," which would serve as a compendium of information, supplied not only by the Council but by other organizations and researchers during the course of the year. Carlson Nelson noted that this report would make an important contribution to the women's business and policy communities by gathering and synthesizing the best and most relevant new research on women's entrepreneurship.

Carlson Nelson also commented on two aspects of the U.S. Small Business Administration's reauthorization proposal - changing the reauthorization period from three to six years, and suspending the pilot program sustaining financial support for women's business centers past their initial five-year funding period. Carlson Nelson voiced the Council's concern with both proposals.

Since its inception with the passage of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988, the impact of the women's business center program has steadily increased. Over the past five years the budget has increased from \$4M to \$12.5M; the number of supported centers has grown from 27 to 81; and the number of clients served has increased from 8,000 to 86,000. The result is a ten-fold increase in clients with just a tripling of the budget.

The Council is one of several supporters of a multi-year study among clients of four women's business centers. Although the

final study will not be published until early 2004, preliminary findings indicate that the centers are making an impact, meeting their mission of reaching out to underserved populations, and are an important early resource for women thinking about starting a business.

In her remarks, Carlson Nelson also recognized the need to measure the economic impact of the women's business center program to gain greater efficiencies and to make wiser decisions about how best to allocate limited resources. The Council can play a vital role in this process and has offered its assistance to the SBA and to the Office of Women's Business Ownership in this regard.

Subsequent to the testimony, the Council voted to support the continuation of sustainability grants for the women's business center program.

SBA's 50th Anniversary Approaching

On August 1, 2003, the U.S. Small Business Administration will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Small Business Act, signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, which created the agency. The SBA's 50th Anniversary will recognize the tremendous contributions made by small businesses over the past fifty years. **50th Anniversary Events will include:**

- August, 2003: 50th Anniversary legislative signing ceremony - Dwight D. Eisenhower Library & Museum, Abilene, Kansas
- September 15 - 20, 2003: SBA's National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo, Washington, DC
- April, 2004: President's Conference on Small Business

Visit www.sba.gov/50 for more information on these events!

NWBC Expands Its Web Site

The NWBC is pleased to announce the launch of our newly revamped Web site, www.nwbc.gov. This comprehensive site will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, women business owners, and others interested in women's entrepreneurship. We encourage you to visit and browse through the site. We welcome your feedback!

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) has recently introduced the **Women's Small Business Programs Improvement Act of 2003** (S.1154), which will provide for the reauthorization of programs administered by the Small Business Administration that assist small business concerns owned and controlled by women. Learn more about this bill by visiting <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.1154>.

Upcoming Events in the Women's Business Community

Women in Leadership: A European Business Imperative

Geneva, Switzerland

June 17 - 18, 2003

www.conference-board.org/conferences

7th International Women's Policy Research Conference: Women Working to Make a Difference, Hosted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research

Washington, DC

June 22 - 24, 2003

www.iwpr.org

Women in Technology International's 2003 Silicon Valley Conference: Women Leading Reinvention and Innovation for Technology, Themselves, Their Companies

San Jose, CA

June 24 - 25, 2003

www.witi.com/center/conferences/santaclara

Women in Business 2003: Sharing the Vision, Hosted by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council

New York City, NY

June 24 - 26, 2003

www.wbenc.org/wib2003

The Iraqi Reconstruction Conference

Washington, DC

July 1 - 2, 2003

www.we-inc.org/2071/wrapper.jsp?PID=2071-5&CID=2071-052103C

2003 Business Professional Women/USA's National Conference

Cleveland, OH

July 15 - 19, 2003

www.bpwusa.org

African American Women in Business Conference

Baltimore, MD

August 7 - 9, 2003

www.aawibc.com

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Council Mission

The National Women's Business Council is a bi-partisan Federal advisory council created to serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners.

The Council's mission is to promote bold initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women's business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces, from start-up to success significance.