

NWBC Funds Three New Projects for 2005

The National Women's Business Council will be undertaking three new projects in 2005, focused on access to federal markets, barriers to business growth, and the impact of support for women's enterprise development. In each case, the Council has contracted with a woman-owned enterprise to assist in these efforts.

Best Practices in Federal Procurement Outreach

This project will gather information from Federal Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBUs) about what specific initiatives, programs and outreach they undertake to increase their agency's spending with women-owned small businesses. The study

(See *New projects funded on p. 6*)

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NWBC Releases Study Documenting Economic Impact of Women's Business Centers

2004 and 2005 Funding Secured for Program

The past three months have seen much action and some progress with respect to the women's business center (WBC) program. After much back and forth between Congress and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), 2004 funding was secured in a way that assures continued support for centers that have been in operation for more than five years (sometimes referred to as "sustainability" centers). The SBA is now providing funding to 105 women's business centers: 21 new centers, 35 that are within their first five years of operation, and 49 centers that have been in operation for more than five years.

The National Women's Business Council published a much-heralded study assessing the economic impact of the centers, using data that is provided by the centers to the SBA. The new study, *Analyzing the Economic Impact of the Women's Business Center Program*, focused on trends between 2001 and 2003. It found that:

- During a time when funding for the program remained essentially flat, the women's business center program gained much momentum: the number of client contacts rose 61%; the number of clients served nearly doubled (a 91% increase); and the number of firms created increased by 376%. Over the period, women's business center clients reported starting 6,600 new firms and creating 12,719 new jobs.
- With an investment of \$36.5 million (the women's business center program budget was \$12 million in 2001 and 2002, and \$12.5 million in 2003), the centers generated an estimated economic impact of \$500 million in gross receipts, with \$51.4 in profits.
- There is no single best model of success for a women's business center. Indeed, the program is enriched by the diversity of non-profit organizations that operate the women's business centers. While many are urban, some focus on rural populations. Some are stand-alone centers, while others are affiliated with other economic development organizations. Success is achieved in a variety of settings.
- The existence of a nearby Small Business Development Center (SBDC) did not appear to impact the level of success of a women's business center, indicating that the WBCs serve a need and a population that is not otherwise served by an SBDC.

The analysis also looked at how much activity a WBC must undertake to generate new clients, start new businesses, and create new jobs. While the cen-

(See *Women's Business Centers on p. 2*)

Featured Organization

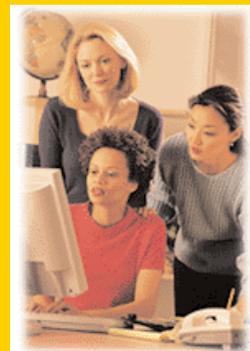
Online Women's Business Center

The Online Women's Business Center is a Web site that offers women information about business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, market research, technology training, and information about the many SBA services and resources available to them.

Special features include interactive mentoring and individual counseling; message boards and a calendar of events. There also are extensive links and resources, including a listing of the locations and contact information for all 105 Women's Business Centers.

Information is in English as well as Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, French, Icelandic, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian.

You can access the Online Women's Business Center at www.onlinewbc.gov. You can find links to other resources at www.nwbc.gov.



Women's Business Centers

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ters do play an important role in imparting information to women and men who go on to start businesses on their own—or who decide that entrepreneurship is not for them—the best way to measure program impact is to look at contacts, clients, and client outcomes. An analysis of these metrics indicates that it takes an average of 3.3 contacts to generate a client. Further, for every 25 clients served, one new business is created. In addition, for every 14 clients a WBC serves, one new job is created.

The complete report, as well as a *Research in Brief* summarizing the study's key findings, can be found on the Council's Web site, www.nwbc.gov.

The information from this study was useful to policy makers as they discussed the future organization of the program. In last-minute action

on Capitol Hill in late November, FY2005 funding for the program was passed at current levels—\$12.5 million. Further, a two-year authorization for this and other SBA programs was included in the bill, including a provision that would allow 48 percent of the program budget to be allocated to centers that have been in operation for more than five years.

While this is a victory for program advocates, the future of the program is expected to remain under discussion. In particular, the SBA has proposed some increased collaboration between the Women's Business Center program and the Small Business Development Center program that may impact future program direction.

"This is a critical time for the women's business center program, and indeed for women's entrepreneurship in general," stated Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and CEO

of Carlson Companies and Chair of the National Women's Business Council. "We continue to support ongoing funding for existing women's business centers, subject to performance reviews, and further expansion of the program with additional centers in underserved areas."

The NWBC also recommends that the SBA gather more complete information from the women's business centers on a regular basis. On an infrequent basis, analysis of some individual (client)-level data from the centers, masked to ensure anonymity, would provide useful information. More detailed evidence of the program's economic impact can be generated though closer examination of existing data, as well as client-level outcomes. ♦

NWBC Unveils Web Site and New Logo

The NWBC released its newly redesigned Web site, which includes its new logo, tagline, an enhanced navigational tools. The new Web site, which can be found at the same URL (www.nwbc.gov), includes all of the information from the old site plus expanded information.



The new logo carries the tagline, “Advisors to the President, Congress and the SBA,” expressing the overall mission of the Council—to bring the policy issues and concerns of women business owners to the attention of key government policy makers.

The Web site’s homepage still features “What’s New” but navigation to all areas of the site now is on the left of the page. This allows users to find information more quickly, including Council member information, documents, reports, newsletters, upcoming events and links to other Web sites.

Additional information is found under these navigation pointers:

- About Us
- Research & Publications
- Business Mentoring
- Conferences & Events
- News Center
- Links

Roundtable Explored Issues and Challenges of Women Business Owners

In 1994, the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA) was established, setting a goal for federal agencies to award at least five percent of all prime and subcontract dollars to women-owned small businesses (WOSBs). In its October 2004 *Issue in Brief*, “Federal Contracting with Women-Owned Businesses, FY1998 to FY2003,” the NWBC reported that, despite continued growth in the number and economic impact of women-owned firms, the five percent goal has never been achieved on a government-wide basis. Nonetheless, three percent of federal contract dollars were spent with women-owned businesses in FY2003—the highest share achieved since this information has been recorded.

To explore this issue further, a roundtable discussion on *Access to Government Markets* was convened by the National Women’s Business Council on September 13, 2004. The event provided an opportunity for the Council to hear from both government officials and women business owners on the issues and challenges faced by WOSBs in the government marketplace with the focus on the utilization of Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBUs) to gain better access to federal procurement opportunities.

The Council heard first from a panel composed of selected staff from federal OSDBUs, moderated by Council member Susan Wilson Solovic. The panel members included Karen Conti, contractor representative for the U.S. Navy’s NAVSEA program; Sherry Cohen, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Shirley Perez, National Aeronautic & Space Administration; and Mary Ellen Conway, Department of Homeland Security. Each spoke to the “best practices” employed by their respective OSDBU to reach out to women business owners. Panel members also referred the Council and audience members to individual agency OSDBU Web sites for details on procurement practices since each federal agency has individual systems and programs for small businesses interested in providing goods and services to the federal government.

Council member Mary J. MacRae moderated a second panel composed of women business owners who have had different experiences, different levels of success and different degrees of satisfaction with government procurement. The Council and audience heard from Dr. Mildred Boyd, President of EduTech, Ltd., who shared her experiences as a successful government contractor. Expressing slightly different experiences, Deirdre A. Magee of Career Management International, Inc., spoke of the time and money it took to pursue procurement opportunities. And Claire Gastañaga of cg² Consulting observed that, in her experiences personally and hearing of the experiences of other WOSBs, government was not very helpful to women and that the perception by many government employees is that women business owners, especially the larger ones, did not need help. She further observed that WOSBs

(See *Issues and challenges* on p. 4)

Side notes...

New partnership to focus on inner-city enterprises

The Urban Entrepreneur Partnership is a groundbreaking national partnership of the National Urban League, Business Roundtable, and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to encourage minority entrepreneurship and business development nationwide. The Partnership will combine private, public and non-profit sector resources to expand entrepreneurship and jobs in historically neglected and economically underserved urban areas. The initiative calls for the development of one-stop economic empowerment centers to provide business training, counseling, financing, and procurement opportunities to minority and urban business owners. The two-year initiative will begin in January 2005 with five economic empowerment centers in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Jacksonville, and Kansas City, with a goal to develop fifteen more centers.

Pioneer in women's business development honored

The Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women honored Hedy Ratner, founder and co-president of the Women's Business Development Center in Chicago at their Sixth Annual "Women Who Dared" event on September 30 in Chicago. Ratner was a member of the NWBC from 1994 to 1997, representing the WBDC.

(See Side notes on p. 5)

Electronic Newsletters Can Provide Important Information

We get many electronic newsletters and many of them contain information of interest to women business owners. Here are three that you might like to read.

- ◆ *Weekly Journal* published by WE (Women Entrepreneurs) Inc.:
<http://www.we-inc.org/2071/>
- ◆ *The Source on Women's Issues in Congress* published by Women's Policy, Inc.:
<http://www.womenspolicy.org>
- ◆ *National Dialogue on Entrepreneurship* published by the Public Forum Institute with a grant from the Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City:
<http://publicforuminstitute.org/nde/news/nde-news.htm>

Issues and challenges

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were often "pitted" against other minority groups, with minority, women-owned businesses faring the poorest in accessing government markets.

After the panel presentations, Council chair Marilyn Carlson Nelson opened up the Roundtable to questions and comments from Council members and audience participants.

In addition to other comments and observations, several recommendations were discussed. These recom-

mendations, as well as a complete summary of the event, will be published by the Council later this year.

In her closing remarks, Nelson observed that the "National Women's Business Council, historically, has encouraged more accessible information, streamlining the application process, and simplifying the paperwork... by both (federal) agencies and WOSBs... to empower more of this kind of contracting to take place." She repeated the Council's commitment of support to keep this country competitive—creating jobs and career opportunities for women entrepreneurs. ◆

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 to significance.

New Communications Director Joins NWBC

Sandra (Sandy) K. Seppala joined the NWBC in mid-October as the Communications Director. She brings more than 20 years of experience in internal and external communications, including Web content, newsletters, writing and editing and publications. She spent 17 years in the computer industry.

Sandy came to the NWBC from a contracting position at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., where she was a communications writer and editor in the Planning, Communications and Outreach Branch of the Electronic Research Administration (eRA).

At the NWBC, Sandy is responsible for the two Web sites (www.nwbc.gov, www.womenbiz.gov), this newsletter and communication strategies and documentation.

Sandy has a B.S. in education with a major in English from Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. She served in the U.S. Peace Corps as a high-school English and history teacher in Kenya in 1977-79. Originally from Detroit, Sandy lived in the San Jose area of California for 22 years. Her two sons and their families live on the West Coast. She now makes her home in Alexandria, Va. ♦

Women's Business Connection Makes Policy Links

The NWBC hosts the Women's Business Connection, a monthly conference call for women business owners on current economic, business and policy issues, as well as information for business growth and expansion. Conference calls feature key members of the federal government, public policy organizations, and business and industry leaders, and address a variety of relevant topics including access to affordable health care, access to training and technical assistance, and access to capital. Women's Business Connection also provides a forum for women business owners to voice their thoughts, concerns and public policy priorities.

Women's Business Connection is held on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 3:00 p.m. ET.

There will be no call in December. On January 25, the topic, *Peer-to-Peer Mentoring*, will be discussed. *A Look Ahead at the 2005 Legislative Calendar* will be the topic on the February 22 call.

Anyone interested is welcome to join the discussion by dialing 1-877-326-2337 and entering the code, 3687613# (this number stays the same for each call).

For more information about the Women's Business Connection, contact Aileen Kishaba, Director of Policy Programs: 202-205-6829, or aileen.kishaba@sba.gov, or go to www.nwbc.gov. ♦

Side notes

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WITI Hall of Fame nominees sought

The 10th Anniversary of the WITI (Women in Technology International) Hall of Fame will be held on September 17, 2005 in New York City. Nominations of a deserving woman to the Hall of Fame are invited. Download the 2005 nomination forms, which are due by February 1, at http://www.witi.com/center/witimuseum/halloffame/WITI_2005_HOF_nomination.pdf.

Guide to doing business globally is published

"The World is Your Market: Small Businesses Gear Up for Globalization" is a new, free, trade resource guide published by GlobeTrade.com. It offers a ten-step strategy for going global. Click [WorldIsYourMarket.doc](#) to see the guide.

Call for entries

The Women Presidents' Organization has announced the first Fast Company/Women Presidents' Organization Awards, *Playing by Their Own Rules: 25 Women Who Are Changing the Game*. Women business owners in the U.S. and Canada who have created their own companies, innovated their own business models and redefined the way they live and work should enter. Winners need not be WPO members. Winners will be featured in the May issue of *Fast Company*.

The Awards Ceremony will be held at the Annual WPO conference on April 7, 2005, in Toronto. The deadline for nominations is January 14. To submit a nomination, go to www.fastcompany.com/keyword/women.

Call for Papers for Best Paper Award in Women's Entrepreneurship

For the second year, the National Women's Business Council is partnering with the International Council for Small Businesses on a Best Paper Award in Women's Entrepreneurship. The award will be presented at the World Conference of the International Council for Small Business in June 2005 in Washington, D.C. Abstracts for consideration are due by January 15 (papers are due on March 15).

The purpose of this award is to:

- Encourage scholarly analysis and research in women's entrepreneurship.

- Increase the level of understanding about the special challenges and needs of women business owners and their enterprises.
- Demonstrate the connection between analysis, understanding and public policy recommendations for action.

To read last year's paper, go to <http://www.nwbc.gov/publications/ICSB-Best-Paper-2004.pdf>.

For details, see <http://www.icsb.org/>. ♦

New projects funded

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also will query women business owners about what programs they have found to be particularly useful and what needs are going unfilled. The effort will include discussions with key women's business leaders to gather their thoughts on the role that OSDBU offices can play to help achieve the federal government's 5% procurement goal with women-owned firms.

Barriers to Business Growth

In March 2004, the National Women's Business Council hosted a well-attended Webcast discussion on the power of mentoring for women business owners. Hundreds of women business owners logged into the discussion, as did women's business center clients and others. The live discussion and the questions that came both from the live and Web-based audience were an additional benefit of the event. A second Webcast discussion is planned for Spring 2005. This next event will focus on the barriers to business growth, and what tools and strategies exist to get

women business owners from self-employment to employer, and from 2 employees to 20.

Video Documentary: Voices of the "Founding Mothers"

The policy underpinnings of support for women's enterprise development were summarized recently in a report issued by the National Women's Business Council. *Policy and Progress: Supporting the Growth of Women's Business Enterprise* described and documented the legislative accomplishments made over the past several decades—most especially since the 1970s. However, the report did not capture the stories of the women and men who were involved in these advocacy efforts, nor did it fully capture the impact of these legislative initiatives. This 30-minute documentary will more fully tell the tale of the support that now exists for both new and growing women-owned businesses through the voices of those who were there as well as those who have reaped the benefits of this progress.

Look for the results of these new projects in mid 2005. ♦

Council Members

Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chair
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.

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

Annie Presley
Principal and Owner
The McKellar Group, Inc.

Susan Wilson Solovic
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Susan Bari
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Upcoming Events in the Women's Business Community

January 2005

- 18 **National Women's Business Council Meeting.** 9 a.m.-1 p.m. ET, Washington, D.C.
- 25 **Women's Business Connection conference call.**
Peer-to-Peer Mentoring. 3-4 p.m. ET

February

- Black History Month**
- 5-8 **NAWBO's Public Policy Days.** See www.nawbo.org.
- 3-5 **Policy & Action 2005: BPW/USA National Policy Conference.** Wyndham Hotel, Washington, D.C. For more information, see: www.bpwusa.org.
- 22 **NWBC Women's Business Connection conference call.** Topic: *A Look Ahead at the 2005 Legislative Calendar.* 3 p.m. ET.
- 27-3/1 **Office Depot 5th Annual Success Strategies for Women Conference.** For more information, see www.officedepotsuccess.com.

March

- Women's History Month**
- 14 **First Count-Me-In for Women's Economic Independence Fundraiser Gala and Business Growth Forum.** New York City, NY. Details: www.count-me-in.org.

Did you know...

...that minority women-owned businesses are a growing force in the U.S. economy? Firms owned by women of color now represent 21 percent of all privately-held, majority-owned firms in the U.S. and they are growing in numbers at four times the rate of all U.S. firms. In recognition of **American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)**, the NWBC has compiled a Fact Sheet about Native American and Alaska Native women business owners. Here are few facts.

- ◆ As of 2002, there are an estimated 77,483 majority-owned, privately-held firms owned by Native American and Alaska Native women in the U.S., employing nearly 88,000 people and generating \$8.7 billion in sales.
 - ◆ Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Native American and Alaska Native women-owned firms increased by 45%, employment grew by 18%, and sales rose by 29%.
 - ◆ Six percent (6%) of minority women-owned firms are owned by Native American and Alaska Natives. Firms owned by Native American and Alaska Native women represent 1% of all privately-held, majority-owned women-owned firms in the U.S.
- To read the complete Fact Sheet, go to <http://www.nwbc.gov/keyfacts/Native-American-Fact-Sheet-2004.pdf> ◆

Quote of the Month

"Prior to my election, young Cherokee girls would never have thought that they might grow up and become chief."

—Wilma Mankiller, former Principal Chief
of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma

