

BUSINESS

SBA's welfare initiative to hire 10,000 women

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez received pledges last week from 20 women's organizations to hire more than 10,000 women from the public assistance roles as part of the agency's Welfare-to-Work initiative.

The commitments to provide the 10,000 new jobs for women on welfare came last week during the Business Women's Network's (BWN) kick-off reception for its new Welfare-to-Work Pledge Campaign.

"We are so pleased and excited at the SBA about this new effort by the Business Women's Network to encourage its strong coalition of women's groups to participate in the welfare-to-work initiative," Alvarez said. "In roughly 10 days, we've received more than 10,000 pledges of support. Imagine what we can accomplish within the next few weeks as additional women's groups make their commitment to hire welfare recipients."

As part of the pledge campaign, the BWN has committed to encouraging its coalition of more than 1,000 women's business and professional organizations to sign a pledge and commit to hiring at least one woman from the welfare roles. The group represents more than nine million business and professional women. The pledge campaign was developed in conjunction with the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership.

"Business women have a deep understanding and commitment to the welfare-to-work initiative as evidenced by the first 20 groups who have made the commitments," BWN President Edie Fraser said. "The BWN pledges to reach out to every business women's group in America to make their pledges to this initiative and to the efforts of the SBA."

The reception capped the group's day-long symposium, entitled "Power in Partnership," where business representatives from the public and private sectors came together to foster and extend the working relationships among women's organizations, corporations and government representatives.

The BWN provides many services to women entrepreneurs, including research, consultations and information exchange programs. For additional information, call 1-800-48-WOMEN.

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NAACP pushes black economic development

Special to Sentinel-Voice

How many times is "The Government" mentioned when African-Americans hold conversations about economic development?

Government is responsible for rules and regulations governing the free-enterprise system, but the private sector is the reason America's capitalistic society is the most productive in the world. To move up the economic ladder, blacks must grasp the importance of finances and businesses to the nation's economy.

The NAACP - a traditional protagonist for government assistance to blacks - has embarked on a nationwide program to monitor assistance corporations provide toward black economic development programs.

Organized by its Business Development Institute, the NAACP says it will utilize its membership and 3,000 chapters using this method to strengthen the economic capacity of African-Americans.

NAACP head Kweisi Mfume says, "The black consumer is entitled to a

Business Exchange

By William Reed, publisher of Who's Who in Black Corporate America.



reciprocal relationship with corporations and businesses." He wants more positive use of the \$400 billion annual purchasing power of black Americans and says his group will employ national selective buying campaigns against corporations not practicing reciprocity with black consumers.

Social activists, such as the NAACP, are to be congratulated for programs employed toward making corporations more aware of black consumers' contributions. However, African-Americans will never gain economic parity until we each do something to help ourselves.

We must change our economic habits and initiate more direct and realistic

participation in the basics of capitalism.

We must understand that in a free enterprise economy, economic forces flow from ownership of human and financial resources.

Blacks own less than 15 businesses per 1,000 persons compared with whites who

have more than 72 businesses per 1,000 persons. Blacks own 500,000 businesses, but to achieve parity we need to own 2 million such enterprises.

Black businesses have annual revenues of \$24 billion, but we need seven times that, \$1.5 trillion a year, for parity. If each of us takes it upon ourselves to turn a dollar over seven more times within our community we'll gain the parity we seek.

We have to save with, build enterprises with and employ each other. For information and materials toward forming Black Investment Clubs, send \$12 to: International Exchange Network, 2054 National Press Building, Washington, D.C. 20045.

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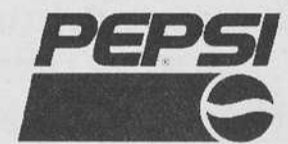
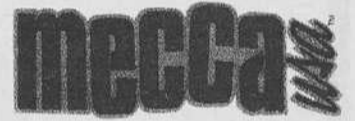
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