






COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

NORTHWEST MINORITY SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL • CONNECTING MBES, CORPORATIONS, AND PUBLIC AGENCIES

The Northwest MSDC proudly serves the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

November 2011 Edition   

Congratulations Scholarship Recipients

In early September, the Northwest Council announced that they were seeking applicants to award two \$1,000 scholarships to the 2011 NMSDC Conference and Business Opportunity Fair to be held at the Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, October 30 - November 2, 2011. The Executive Committee of the Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee (MBEIC) and the staff of the Council carried out the selection process.

The scholarship was open to certified MBEs who met the following criteria:

1. Good standing with the Council for two or more years
2. Have not previously attended the NMSDC conference on scholarship
3. Committed to reporting on their experience at the conference and applicability of what they learned to their businesses.

"This year's applicant pool was quite competitive," said Benjamin Sheppard, Northwest MSDC Marketing and Communications Specialist. "The Council selected winners by the value their participation would add to the conference and the value participation in the conference would bring to their businesses."

Congratulations to the 2011 Scholarship Recipients:

Frank Lemos, LDC Inc.
and
Tom Nesby, Nesby + Associates

MBEs Develop New Market

MBEs are pushing forward with patience and persistence amidst a choppy economic forecast. In a time of uncertainty, one would expect more conservative strategic business decisions in hopes of riding out the storm. However, we are finding that some MBEs are electing to live the entrepreneurial spirit and assume more risks. They're doing this by choosing to develop and introduce new products into the market, paving their own paths in fields that once did not exist. With high start up costs, research & development expenses, and unknown return on investment, introducing a new product in the current economic condition demonstrates the risk that MBEs are pursuing in order to survive.

The Council wants to acknowledge the following Council-certified MBEs for their tenacity and market leadership:

Curvex Toothbrush

As a practicing dentist for over 20 years, Dr. Stephen Harada was faced with a dilemma as he noticed the lack of dental oral care options available to his patients. His commitment to the industry prompted him to explore ways in solving this problem. With the growing awareness of dental plaque and its link to heart disease, birth defects, and pancreatic cancer, the most effective solution was found in the most logical item - the toothbrush. Harada realized the need for an enhanced and multifunctional toothbrush in the market, for which he developed Curvex and Curvex 2.

The Curvex and Curvex 2 toothbrushes both have domestic and international patents due to its one-of-a-kind features. With tapered soft bristles on the ends of the toothbrush, the brush meets the inside curves of the upper and lower front teeth where most brushes cannot reach. The convex head is engineered to go further back in the mouth and offers an elevated cleaning experience. In addition, the Curvex 2 brush is designed to meet the needs of consumers with braces and dentures. The result is a cleaner brushing experience that has been statistically proven to enhance the user's oral health.

As a reciprocal MBE based in Northern California, Harada is indebted with the Northwest MSDC for providing the resources needed to place the Curvex toothbrush in regional markets. "Were it not for the Northwest MSDC, especially Fernando Martinez, I would have never gotten to the front door," said Harada. The various introductions that were made to Corporate Members allowed for Harada to successfully land the Curvex toothbrushes in SuperValu markets. He is currently in the process of creating educational videos to better showcase the health benefits of his toothbrushes.

For MBEs who are thinking about new market penetration, the Council is an invaluable resource. "Every MBE has a responsibility to their regional council. They've gone to bat for us and it is important for us to continue the mission of the Council," says Harada. For more information about the Curvex toothbrushes, visit www.edt-curvex.com.



D.A.M. Salsa

Named after owner David A Martinez, from Portland, OR, D.A.M. Salsa shows its boldness in the market. Inspired by deep roots in his family restaurant, Martinez was determined to create an authentic salsa that would remind consumers of delicious home cooking. His determination paid off. Fernando Martinez (no relation to David), President and CEO of the Northwest MSDC stated, "Next to homemade salsa, this is the best salsa I have tasted off the shelf." The all natural, no preservative salsa offers grocers a cross-promotional placement opportunity in the nutrition, gourmet, and Hispanic shelving sections. The product is currently being distributed in New Seasons, Whole Foods, Thriftway, and several other markets in the Pacific Northwest.

The Northwest MSDC has provided Martinez with leads on potential store distribution, as well as informational phone calls from fellow MBEs. Knowing the industry well, the "hurry up and wait" model is not stopping Martinez from persistently following up. "If you cannot get into the front door, try the back door," advises Martinez. In addition to utilizing Council resources, it is also critical to be persistent. "Just because one person says 'No,' does not mean another person won't say 'Yes.'" For more information about D.A.M. Salsa, visit www.damsalsa.com.



16 oz Jars

1/2 Gallon

Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce

What makes the difference between dining out and eating in is the sauce. Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce outshines its competitors with its fifth generation gourmet recipe. The name "Stesa" is formed through business partners, Michael Stewart (Ste), Certified MBE and Dr. Cosmo Salibello (sa) and originates from a family recipe in Gaeta, Italy. The sauce contains no MSG, is gluten free, and has the lowest sodium content of among the top marinara sauces. You'll often find people associating healthy food with blandness, but Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce wants to begin changing this invalid preconception through delivering a sauce with great quality and taste.

Northwest MSDC supported Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce through a number of introductions. Being able to initiate the first step allowed Stewart Marketing Group to take hold of the opportunity to penetrate the market and drive the product to fruition. The information and advice sharing was also a critical resource for the company. Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce was able to gain invaluable insight from other MBEs who sold similar products.

For more information, visit www.stesafoods.com. You can also purchase Stesa Foods Marinara Sauce online at www.stewartmarketinggroup.com.



MBEs are not idly waiting for opportunities to emerge. They are proactively finding opportunities and paving their own paths to success.

The Council encourages Corporate and Agency Members to reach out for the opportunity to learn more about these products. As fellow MBEs, use these companies as resources to share information and knowledge. If you are interested or are considering introducing a new product into the market, please remember to use the Northwest MSDC as a resource. A diverse network is your greatest ally in a turbulent market.

Annual Scholarship Fundraiser

Golf happens regardless of the rain or shine. The Northwest MSDC capitalizes on this Pacific Northwest mentality with its Fifteenth Annual Scholarship Fundraiser and Silent Auction- "The Golf Tournament."

This year's tournament was held on Monday, August 29 at Federal Way's Twin Lakes Golf and Country Club. Over 150 attendees registered and formed 29 golf teams representing both corporate members and Council-certified MBEs.

Golfers were greeted by brisk and overcast weather at the onset of the day but still came out in droves in support of the event designed to raise money for the Council's scholarship recipients. Doors opened at 10am and attendees were free to peruse the assortment of golf-themed silent auction items donated by Brown Bear Car Wash, Puget Sound Energy, Tacos Chukis, Twin Lakes Golf Club and Country Club, Westin Seattle, Sealaska Corporation, Gobo Enterprises, Costco Wholesale Corporation, Radarworks, Dynamic Language, Piraeus Data, among others. This time was also ideal for attendees to network and warm up with the newly implemented Putting and Chipping Contest.

Certified council members were also given the opportunity to sponsor booths between each of the golf holes, serving as ideal opportunities to network in between tee times. Many of the exhibitors heralded this as one of the most valuable components of the event. "This was the perfect opportunity to be casual with corporate members. Everyone was able to indulge in the fun environment, and this was the catalyst for great conversation," said the Principal of Council-certified MBE T.D. Wang Advertising Group.

At the day's end, tournament winners and auction item winners were announced at the closing reception. Over \$9,000 was raised at the event, and attendees were in consensus on the success of the event. Event coordinators are already beginning to develop the Sixteenth Annual Scholarship Fundraiser and Silent Auction for 2012.

Company Spotlight: Itron Supplier Diversity

Itron Inc. is a Regional Corporate Member who has been in the global utility industry for over 100 years. They are a leading provider of intelligent metering, data collection, and utility software who also offers related services in project management, installation, and consulting.

Itron was recently awarded the Edison Electric Institute's (EEI) Prime Supplier Award earlier this year. EEI gives this award to one company that has made great strides in the development or progression of supplier diversity programs. This

illustrates that the company has gone out of its way to provide procurement opportunities for minority, women, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.

Although Itron's procurement policy has included efforts regarding disadvantaged businesses for some time, the company launched a formal supplier diversity program in 2010, gaining them national attention. The initiative was designed to increase the incorporation of minority, women and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses into procurement decisions. Since its inception, Itron has implemented this program throughout all of its North American locations.

Itron has chosen Supplier Diversity Champions throughout its North American manufacturing locations whose role is to advocate for more diversity in the procurement process at their respective facilities. These individuals learned on how to look up suppliers for upcoming RFP opportunities, verify certifications, and are able to tell prospective suppliers where to go to ascertain these certifications.

"Itron recognizes that supplier diversity is a strategic business decision and a key component of our future growth,"said Itron Supplier Diversity Specialist Kate Armstrong. "Our commitment to supplier diversity compliments our core. An inclusive supplier base brings a diversity of thought, style, approach, talent, and innovation to our supply chain and helps define a smarter future."

For more information about Itron Inc., visit www.itron.com.



Kate Armstrong and Russ Kenworthy holding the EEI Supplier Diversity Award



Knowledge to Shape Your Future

Corporate Platinum



Corporate Gold



Corporate Silver



Corporate Bronze

