



PRESS RELEASE

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Texas Business Alliance Launched to Prepare Small Business Owners for Growth and Job Creation

HOUSTON (Feb. 10, 2009) – Texas Business Alliance (TBA), a membership-based, solutions oriented, small business development, 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization, publically launched on Friday, January 30, 2009, at Houston's Hotel Derek before a crowd of nearly 200 minority- and women-owned small business owners, community leaders and corporate representatives.

Susan Repka, executive director, WBEA, opened the seminar with a warm welcome and introduction of TBA Founder and CEO Jeffrey Boney. Alfred Edmond, SVP and editor-in-chief of BlackEnterprise.com, moderated a panel discussion on the topic, "State of the Houston Small Business Economy: The Small Business Stimulus Package – Everything a small business owner must know to stimulate their business." The panel addressed practical and novel solutions for stimulating economic development by increasing the capacity of minority- and women-owned businesses.

Edmond's keynote address encouraged small business owners to view these challenging economic times as an opportunity to strengthen their business infrastructure. Edmond admonished small business owners to not give way to fear, *"This is just an economic cycle and we will get through it just as our parents and grand parents survived the Great Depression. Unlike some large corporations, you are still here!"*

"The pulse of our economy relies heavily on the success of small businesses," said panel member Irvin Ashford, vice president of Public Affairs and director, Community Development and External Affairs, Comerica Bank-Texas Market. "The Texas Business Alliance is committed to bringing business and community leaders together to generate solutions that foster growth among small business. We gladly support their efforts."

City Controller Annise Parker presented Boney with a proclamation from Mayor Bill White acknowledging the day as Texas Business Alliance Day in Houston. The program ended with a presentation of the TBA Vanguard Award to Jason Medlock, president and managing partner, 3131 Properties, Ltd. The Vanguard Award recognizes a minority supplier who has exemplified leadership and ingenuity in business.

TBA will help spur job creation by strengthening minority- and women-owned small businesses and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among youth. Its flagship business development programs will rollout beginning in June 2009.

TBA flagship programs are the Business Enterprise Academy™, a six-month, small business incubator program; One Woman™, a national, two-day women's business conference; The 'Prime' Objective™ Joint Venture Partnership Program; and the Youth Entrepreneurship Academy™.

TBA will host a series of development seminars called "Community Collaboratives." Community Collaboratives are periodic forums and workshops geared to educate the community and small businesses on matters that affect their daily lives. Additional details will be available on the TBA Web site for the following Community Collaboratives:

- QuickBooks Training. Tuesday, February 24, 2009. Financial infrastructure skills management seminar.

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- Capital Connections™. March-December 2009. Financial institutions present loan packaging details and small business products and services.
- Effective Staffing and Employee Retention. March 2009.
- How to do Business with the Government and Department of Homeland Security. Tuesday, April 14, 2009.
- B2B Supplier Interaction Techniques. May 2009.

TBA's membership enrollment is now open to individuals, small business owners, public and private entities, chambers of commerce and other member-driven organizations, media, individuals and youth. In addition to the Houston launch, chapters are being established in Dallas/Ft. Worth, San Antonio, Austin and El Paso.

Through March 31, 2009, TBA is extending to small business owners a \$100 Small Business Stimulus savings off of their membership fee. TBA is sensitive to these challenging times and also looks forward to immediately working with MWBEs to increase their capacity.

Membership benefit highlights for small business owners include a members only area for the TBA directory and bid opportunities, MWBE program access and discounts, joint venture partnership qualifications program, supplier match and referral program, access to capital, and member advertising and marketing. Corporate member benefits include access to a larger pool of qualified suppliers, resources to make doing business with MWBEs in core areas simple, opportunities to improve supplier diversity programs, and program sponsorship opportunities to support MWBE and economic development.

New member orientation and Q&A programs will be held quarterly. For more information, contact Margo Williams Handy at membership@texasbusinessalliance.org or 281.213.9554.

Texas Business Alliance thanks the following panel members for their time and intellectual capital:

- Honorable Annise Parker, City Controller, City of Houston
- Irvin Ashford Jr., VP Corporate Public Affairs, Community Development and External Affairs Director, Comerica Bank
- Pedro Garcia, Sr. Outreach Program Coordinator, Small Business Development Division, Port of Houston Authority
- Elsie Huang, President, Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Winston Labbe, VP Community Development Lending, Amegy Bank of Texas
- Carla Lane, President and CEO, Lane Staffing, Inc.
- Jason Medlock, President and Managing Partner, 3131 Properties, Ltd.
- Freddie Raines, SW District Manager, Senior Vice President, Capital One Bank
- Brian Tippens, Manager, Global Supplier Diversity, Hewlett-Packard Company
- Carmen Watkins, President and CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston

The launch program was sponsored by Platinum Sponsor DiverseStaff a Lane Staffing Company, Gold Sponsor 3131 Properties, Ltd., and Silver Sponsors Sharon Phillips, President, Multicultural Connections and Byron Carter, President, Pretty Quick Delivery Services.

About Texas Business Alliance

A member-driven, solutions oriented, 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization, with a mission to equip minority- and women-owned businesses to be qualified suppliers, ready to compete for public, private and international opportunities through progressive development, and specialized training. Its vision is to strengthen the Texas economy and spur job creation by expanding minority- and women-owned businesses, and encouraging youth entrepreneurship. Chapter organizations are being pursued in Dallas/Ft. Worth, San Antonio, Austin and El Paso. Visit www.texasbusinessalliance.org for more details or call 713.738.7578.