ANNOUNCING THE
2016 WBENC WBE STARS!

AN EYE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS:
SHELLEE FISHER PHOTOGRAPHY
# Calendar of Events

This calendar includes events hosted by WBENC’s Regional Partner Organizations and Strategic Partners. Visit WBENC’s Online Calendar for more events.

## December 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>SBA Marketing Your Business to the Federal Government Webinar</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>WBENLink Database Training Webinar</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>WPEO-NY Brown Bag Lunch with AT&amp;T</td>
<td>New York, N.Y. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>7th Annual ASBCC / USWCC National Small Business Contracting Summit Southeast</td>
<td>Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>WPEO-NY Celebrating Our Partners</td>
<td>New York, N.Y. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## February 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>WBCC Parade of Stars Awards Gala</td>
<td>Dallas, Texas. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>WBENCLink Database Training Webinar</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>ISM Diversity 2016</td>
<td>New Orleans, La. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>Diversity Alliance for Science Networking Conference and EXPO Calif.</td>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>CWE Coffee &amp; Connections Birmingham</td>
<td>Boston, Mass. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>WPEO-DC Corporate Round Table</td>
<td>McLean, Va. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>WBEC-South Alabama Lunch and Learn: Birmingham</td>
<td>Birmingham, Ala. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>WBEC-PA-DE-sNJ Listening to Your Business</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>WBEC PA-DE-sNJ: Get to Know Us</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Astra – Galaxy Supplier Program</td>
<td>Renton, WA. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-1</td>
<td>14th Annual Enterprising Women of the Year Awards Celebration &amp; Conference</td>
<td>Miami, Fla. Click <a href="#">here</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**DECEMBER 2015 EDITION OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

## ENGAGEMENT
- Announcing the 2016 WBENC WBE Stars 6
- WBE-to-WBE Success Story: WBEs Light Up the Room in WBE-to-WBE MatchMaking Event 31
- WBENC Staff Attends Vets Rock 32
- RPO Society Pages: CWE, WBEC, WPEO-DC, WBCS, and GWBC 34

## RESOURCES
- Your Advice: As We Look Ahead To The New Year, How Do You Work With Your Team To Review Goals? 39
- New on Insights! Getting Started with Women Owned 40

## ADVERTISERS’ INDEX
- 2016 Summit & Salute Save the Date 19
- Women Owned 24
- WBENC Shop 28
- WBENC Student Entrepreneur Program 30
- Legacy Bracelet 38

---

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**
Pat Birmingham

**SENIOR MANAGER, MARKETING**
Laura Swenson

**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**
Laura Berry
Cogberry Creative, LLC

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**
Allison Gibson

**PRODUCTION AND DESIGN**
Limb Design

**PHOTOGRAPHY**
Kathy Anderson
Shellee Fisher Photography
Linda Johnson

**WRITERS**
Pamela Prince-Eason
President and CEO

Lynthia Romney
RomneyCom, LLC
Candace Waterman
Chief of Staff
LaKesha White
Senior Compliance Manager
DEAR FRIENDS,

It is hard to believe that 2015 is coming to a close. We are very proud of our collective accomplishments this year, continuing to drive women’s business development to new heights. Our success encompasses our entire community, our Corporate and Government members, WBEs, Regional Partner Organizations, and affiliate partners. We are thankful for each and every one of you.

Marketing is an integral component of our growth, which complements all that we do to achieve our CORE strategy. This year our branding promoted the Women Owned logo, now seen on many WBE products, both in stores across the nation and around the globe and online – even on national television in the CLR commercial!

Our engagement on social media has more than doubled, and we are continuously improving the way we communicate with our community as well as with the public, including redesigning our President’s Report, and refreshing and updating our websites. We are excited to continue our multimedia communications strategy in the new year, so be on the lookout for some new and exciting updates!

As part of our multilayered approach, we will be focusing on our ACT Intentionally campaign – an important component of our branding and growth strategy that supports those who support us. We will be unveiling our ACT Intentionally awareness and marketing campaign in early 2016. This campaign will have an active role for each of us as we make decisions on where to best shop, travel, and fuel our lives every day.

WBENC’s journey has evolved through our messaging, from “We Are WBENC!” to “Join Forces. Succeed Together.” We are ready to continue this evolution with Women Owned, ACT Intentionally and Hes4Shes. Stay tuned and stay involved: We need all of you on this journey with us.

We have much to look forward to in 2016. The entire WBENC staff wishes all of you a happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year!

Warm Regards,

PAT BIRMINGHAM
VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING
ANNOUNCING SUMMIT & SALUTE KEYNOTE SPEAKER
OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST
NASTIA LIUKIN

AND BECOMING THE ALL-AROUND GYMNASTICS CHAMPION AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN BEIJING, CHINA.

This March, she will join WBENC in Phoenix, Arizona for the annual Summit & Salute themed “Climbing to the Summit,” where she will share what she has learned by reaching for goals, overcoming obstacles, and learning how to pick yourself up after the inevitable falls.

Born in Moscow, Russia, her parents were both champion gymnasts in their native country. The Liukins moved to the United States when Nastia was two and a half, because they wanted to give their daughter every opportunity possible. Even then, Nastia was certain she wanted to be a gymnast, and spent every hour she could in training. That dedication paid off.

A 2014 inductee into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame, Liukin remains involved in the sport as the lead gymnastics television analyst for NBC in addition to serving as an ambassador for USA Gymnastics and The United States Olympic Committee’s Road to Rio. Most recently, she was a contestant on Dancing with the Stars Season 20 and is currently crisscrossing the country sharing her life experiences on The Shine Tour, a motivational event that encourages girls of all ages to have self-confidence and shine in their own lives. Liukin co-founded The Shine Agency, a sports and entertainment lifestyle firm in 2015, and is now completing her senior year at New York University.

In her new memoir released this month, Finding My Shine, Liukin shares not only her personal journey of success, but also her biggest challenges, including her career ending fall during the 2012 Olympic Trials that she now says was the defining moment of her life. Grace and beauty in the sport of gymnastics led Nastia Liukin to her crowning achievement at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, but winning five medals was only the beginning for this golden girl.

REGISTER TODAY FOR SUMMIT & SALUTE!

WWW.WBENC.ORG // DECEMBER EDITION 2015
ANNOUNCING THE 2016 WBENC WBE STARS

EACH YEAR WBENC HONORS JUST 14 EXEMPLARY WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS OUT OF MORE THAN 13,000 WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (WBES) WITH THE NATION’S PREMIER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN’S BUSINESS LEADERSHIP—THE WBE STAR. THE 2016 WBENC WBE STARS ARE SELECTED BY WBENC’S 14 REGIONAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS (RPOS), WHICH PROCESS WBENC’S WORLD-CLASS CERTIFICATION, IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING SKILLS—AND BUSINESS-BUILDING PROGRAMS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONS. READ THE PRESS RELEASE.

CAMILLE AUSTIN
PRESIDENT, Elite Roofing Services, Inc.
Founded: 2004 | WBENC-Certified: 2005
Headquartered: Tampa, FL | About: Elite Roofing Services, Inc. is a women-owned Florida Roofing Contractor. We are a commercial, industrial, and residential roofing installer and supplier. | Website: eliteroofingservices.com
RPO: Women’s Business Development Council of Florida

MICHELLE BELL
CEO, 1st Choice, LLC
Headquartered: Silver Spring, MD | About: 1st Choice is a management consulting firm specializing in the delivery of program management that focuses on delivering innovative document and talent management solutions to organizations throughout the United States. | Website: 1stchoicegov.com
RPO: Women Presidents’ Educational Organization-DC

DOREEN BLADES
PRESIDENT, US Eco Products Corporation
Founded: 2009 | WBENC-Certified: 2012
Headquartered: Haverhill, MA | About: US Eco Products Corporation partners to deliver safe, effective sustainable products and advisory services that help companies reduce their environmental impact. We are a one-stop shop for environmentally sustainable products, cleaning up and preventing environmental problems while making it profitable to be green. | Website: usecoproducts.com
RPO: Center for Women & Enterprise

LINDA BOASMOND
PRESIDENT, Cedar Concepts Corporation
Founded: 1991 | WBENC-Certified: 2004
Headquartered: Chicago, IL | About: Cedar Concepts Corporation processes chemicals other companies use in products designed to enhance personal life and work, including surfactants, lubricants, and chemical intermediates. | Website: cedarconcepts.net
RPO: Women’s Business Development Center-Chicago
ROSE ANN DARE  
**PRESIDENT, Hydro Dyne Inc**  
Founded: 1967 | **WBENC-Certified:** 1998  
Headquartered: Massillon, OH | **About:** Hydro Dyne Inc. designs, engineers, and manufactures as well as provides field service and in-house repair of heat transfer equipment for fossil fuel power, renewable power, chemical, oil and gas, and industrial industries. | **Website:** hydrodyneinc.com

RPO: Ohio River Valley Women’s Business Council

DEBBIE DRURY  
**PRESIDENT and OWNER, Market Doctors Direct**  
Founded: 1998 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2011  
Headquartered: Houston, TX | **About:** Market Doctors is the industry leader in marketing and advertising, specializing in direct mail, branding, and digital marketing solutions. We combine experience, creativity, and technology to provide superior results for every campaign. | **Website:** marketdoctors.com

RPO: Women’s Business Enterprise Alliance

JOAN M. LAGRASSE  
**OWNER and CEO, Imagen, LLC**  
Founded: 1996; acquired in 2002  
**WBENC-Certified:** 2002 | **Headquartered:** Nashville, TN  
About: We are storytellers. We tell the stories of people, places, big ideas, and innovations, through the creative design and meticulous craftsmanship of exhibits. Imagen is a full-service custom exhibit house. | **Website:** imagenanything.com

RPO: Women’s Business Enterprise Council South

JENNIFER MAIER  
**CEO, Women’s Distribution Services (WDS, Inc.)**  
Founded: 2007 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2008  
Headquartered: Lake Wylie, SC | **About:** WDS is an international supply chain management, warehousing, and distribution company with 22 certified locations across the United States and Canada, providing a secure supply chain in manufacturing industries, with 24/7 and just-in-time deliveries, as well as automation engineering and facility auditing.  
Website: womends.com | **RPO:** Greater Women’s Business Council

MARGARET MARCUCCI  
**CEO, Coranet Corp**  
Founded: 1987; acquired in 2004  
**WBENC-Certified:** 2004 | **Headquartered:** New York, NY  
**About:** Coranet is a technology services company that provides enterprise, government, and mid-market organizations with a wide range of extremely dependable, cost-effective, and first-rate infrastructure services. | **Website:** coranet.com

RPO: Women Presidents’ Educational Organization-NY

CARRIE MARTINEZ  
**PRESIDENT, CM Productions, Inc.**  
Founded: 2000 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2010  
Headquartered: Dallas, TX | **About:** CM Productions, Inc. is an award-winning, full-service, script-to-screen video production company based in Dallas, Texas. | **Website:** cmproductions.tv

RPO: Women’s Business Council-Southwest

SUSAN MUNRO  
**PRESIDENT, Hybrid Collective**  
Founded: 2009 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2012  
Headquartered: Marina Del Rey, CA and Austin, TX  
**About:** Hybrid is a multicultural marketing and branded content creative studio. Hybrid offers creative/marketing strategy development, live action production, and post-production for general, Asian, Hispanic, African American, and LGBT markets. | **Website:** hybridcollective.tv | **RPO:** Women’s Business Enterprise Council-West

CAROL PHILP  
**PRESIDENT, CPI Creative**  
Founded: 1994 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2003  
Headquartered: Pittsburgh, PA | **About:** CPI Creative is a collaborative marketing partner specializing in custom product development and manufacturing, promotional products, logoed apparel, and headwear—all supported by in-house teams of graphic designers and product specialists.  
Website: cpicreative.com | **RPO:** Women’s Business Enterprise Council PA-DE-sNJ

SERAFINA SCHORER  
**CEO, RIM Custom Racks**  
Founded: 1978 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2010  
Headquartered: Detroit, MI | **About:** RIM Custom Racks is a leader in the material handling industry. RIM sets itself apart from its competition by offering the full life cycle of automotive, agricultural, and recreational parts, racks, and containers including concept, design, prototype, fabrication, modification, repair, and reuse. | **Website:** rimcustomracks.com | **RPO:** Great Lakes Women’s Business Council

KELLY SPARKS  
**CEO, VMG/ studio520**  
Founded: 2004 | **WBENC-Certified:** 2012  
Headquartered: Bellevue, WA | **About:** VMG is a unique hybrid of creative marketing agency and video production company. From our beginning, VMG created a team to bring all services in-house. | **Website:** vmgstudio520.com

RPO: Astra Women’s Business Alliance
CONGRATULATIONS TO TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM GRADUATES

IN EARLY OCTOBER, 59 WBENC-CERTIFIED WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS ATTENDED THE TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM, AN INTENSIVE, FIVE-DAY EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR WBES. IT IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON INCREASING THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ROBUSTNESS OF THE PARTICIPANT’S OWN BUSINESS.

“This has reignited my passion for reaching out to WBES locally to connect, network, and engage to move our Regional Partner Organization to the next level as a B2B resource for our individual and cumulative growth, which will ultimately benefit each business owner, our RPO, and our Corporate Partners!”

— Gail Moore
Custom Plastics and More

“The Tuck-WBENC Executive Program was life changing. I am a business owner, but I was never trained on how to actually manage a growing company. The top-notch professors from Tuck and the professional team at WBENC helped me learn more about executive leadership, accounting, excellent customer service, and why it’s so important to work with other WBES. I also met a fantastic network of women that will be my advisors and friends for many years to come. Thank you WBENC for offering such a wonderful development opportunity.”

— Laura Gross
Scott Circle

UNDERWRITER/ HOST SPONSOR

MAJOR SPONSORS
“The program enriched my leadership, gave me new perspectives, and grew my knowledge base by leaps and bounds. The quality of the program exceeds what is presently available for executives as it gives a leader five days to learn, reflect, collaborate, and take your leadership to a new level when you are willing to stretch your beliefs. My organization’s success will be accelerated as a result of being in this program. It is a ‘must-do’ for any leader driven by the greater good of business and leadership.”

— Betsy Cerulo
AdNet

“This program should be experienced by every WBENC member. The power and energy of all the brilliant women owners sharing our stories was phenomenal! The professors were delightful. This truly helped me see my business though a whole new perspective. Thank you all for this opportunity!”

— Tracy Becker
Tracy Becker Construction, Inc.

“Taking a week away from the business seemed impossible at first, but it was indeed one of my most memorable and inspiring learning experiences. The program gave me an incredible opportunity to not only learn from a world-class faculty, but also to connect with over 50 women across the country and the globe.”

— Sonu Ratra
Akraya, Inc.

THE TUCK-WBENC EXECUTIVE PROGRAM IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY IBM. WBENC CONTINUES TO BE GRATEFUL FOR IBM’S CONTINUED DEDICATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WBENC-CERTIFIED WBES.

APPLICATIONS WILL BE OPEN IN JANUARY 2016
LEARN MORE HERE
When Nikki Barua arrived from India in 1997 to attend business school in the United States, she had $250 in her pocket and a blank canvas for her future. But she had a history of dreaming big, and no intention of creating a Plan B.

“It was this entirely different context, where I realized I was not American, not white, not male, and not straight,” says Barua. “That experience made me incredibly resourceful and resilient; it was a catalytic experience.”

Barua soon found herself in a successful consulting career, working for high-profile clients such as Disney and Nike. Fifteen years later, the more time she spent helping very large enterprises chase innovation, the more she wanted to reimagine the innovation process.

“I spent time getting to know the tech startup ecosystem, culture, and new organizational models,” says Barua. “We’re living in a world of so much disruption, and fast-moving startups truly have the momentum. But you can’t just apply the startup model to big companies seeking innovation. I had to develop new tools and techniques. I wanted to help large corporations ‘innovate at speed’—and be in the business of making elephants run.”

Barua founded her innovation agency, BeyondCurious, in 2011. After winning business with Toyota, she found out about the value of third-party certification. In 2013, Barua not only got WBENC-Certified, but also gained certification as a LGBTBE through the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) and as an MBE through National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). In October, she was named the 2015 NMSDC Supplier of the Year.
“We’ve had a banner year at BeyondCurious—and being selected for the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program makes it even better,” says Barua. “EY is providing a visible platform to be a role model. We need to be visible as change agents for diversity and help close the gender gap in business.”

In addition to what EY offers in the program, Barua is also excited to learn from other highly successful entrepreneurs among the Entrepreneurial Winning Women.

Her entrepreneurial journey includes time on Wall Street, in the White House, and in the television industry at Time Warner.

Yet it was her work as a venture capitalist for seven years that really taught Miller what it takes to start and grow a business as well as master the early-stage models for growth. She co-founded BTG in 2007 after realizing there was an opportunity to create a marketplace for independent business talent interested in project-based work.

“I started to see the supply of independent talent rise and an increased demand from companies to find more flexible ways to get work done,” says Miller. “Relying only on permanent employees and consulting firms was not enough choice. At the same time, I wanted to create a more efficient way for the amazing business talent to pursue independent careers.”

Miller’s expertise, including her law degree from University of Virginia, have helped her grow the business quickly. But it wasn’t until some of her Fortune 500 clients asked her to get certified as a woman-owned business that she became WBENC-Certified in 2012.

“I vaguely knew there were potential places to get certified, and I knew it was advantageous to be certified,” says Miller. “When our clients asked us to get certified, we learned about the rigorous WBENC certification process.”

BTG has continued to grow and expand, attaining status on the Inc. magazine 5000 list and the Forbes Most Promising Companies in 2015. After reaching the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Los Angeles region semi-finals a few years ago, Miller was selected for the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program this year.

“Once you’re in the EY universe, they support you,” says Miller. “EY’s commitment to this program is extraordinary. They support you onsite at the EY Strategic Growth Forum in Palm Springs, but they also create a family of support afterward.”

In addition to the support, Miller is impressed with the resources and tools EY makes available, including the opportunity to improve and track company processes.

“I believe that every human being has a gift, and so does every organization,” says Barua. “Like most people, organizations don’t know what that gift is, they don’t know how to apply that gift, and they are afraid of taking that step forward. My mission is to help people and organizations unlock their limitless potential.

www.beyondcurious.com
ensure you’re maximizing things like your sales process, technology, and operations.”

Overall, Miller is looking forward to increasing BTG’s visibility through the program, but she is also working on moving the ball forward on her thought leadership work, including writing and speaking on the future of work and diverse leadership.

“Our company mission is to bring together the world’s top companies and independent professionals to enhance business performance and improve people’s lives,” says Miller. “The EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program is incredible and important, and people should be aware of how much women leaders can benefit from these resources.”

Our company mission is to bring together the world’s top companies and independent professionals to enhance business performance and improve people’s lives,” says Miller. “The EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program is incredible and important, and people should be aware of how much women leaders can benefit from these resources.”

“Even as you start collecting successes, it’s so important to never underestimate your network,” says Mirza. “I always find the time to invest and treat people with compassion. People will notice that.”

BE Claudia Mirza has an easy laugh. As the CEO and Co-Founder of Akorbi, a global language, technology, and staffing enterprise, she says it pays to be optimistic. After emigrating from her native Colombia to earn her business degree, she has continually searched for positivity when faced with adversity, including when her job at a technology corporation was eliminated in the early 2000s.

“That loss was a pinnacle moment,” says Mirza. “I didn’t want to be helpless. I wanted to take matters into my own hands. That’s when the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GDHCC) encouraged me to start my own business.”

Mirza founded Akorbi in 2003, and transformed the company from a home-based translation service to a global company with almost 600 employees. As with any company, Mirza remembers, there were specific challenges along the way.

“We had to reach out to micro-lending services to make it through payroll during a high-growth stage in 2004,” says Mirza. “Without that access to capital, we wouldn’t be here.”

Although Mirza pursued WBENC certification based on its “prestigious reputation” in the private and public sectors, she also quickly learned the WBENC network is equally powerful. She was certified in 2007, but really got involved in recent years.

“The WBENC name brand is so powerful,” says Mirza. “But our local RPO, the Women’s Business Enterprise Council-Southwest (WBCS), is also very inclusive. They are not shy about inviting the GDHCC to the table.”

It was WBCS leadership who pushed her to apply for the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program. Despite her characteristically open mind, Mirza admitted she didn’t have high hopes.

“After attending the program, I feel like I’m able to see the world from a different perspective,” says Mirza. “EY recognizes successful entrepreneurs, and they give us this tremendous ecosystem of professionals, including venture capitalists and retired leaders. I never expected so many resources operating at such a level and presented to me at such a critical time in my business.”

Mirza notes that this “elite class of women” has the opportunity to mentor one another from different perspectives. She appreciated meeting program alums to learn what they have accomplished since being selected for the program. Mentorship is something Mirza feels passionate about.

“Even as you start collecting successes, it’s so important to never underestimate your network,” says Mirza. “I always find the time to invest and treat people with compassion. People will notice that.”

As for next steps, Mirza says she feels like she has been “stuck in a can” and the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program has helped open the top of that can and show her new methods and strategies to run her business and expand her mindset.

“That’s the good thing about being in business,” says Mirza. “Everything is possible. You cannot control love or health, but you can control business.”

CLAUDIA MIRZA
Co-Founder and CEO, Akorbi
Plano, TX
Competitive industries, such as information technology (IT) and telecommunications, often rely on market research to predict growth cycles. WBE Michelle Vondrasek, President of Von Technologies, is the first to say she consumes research to best decide whether her next steps are grounded in “fact or feel.”

Next year, Vondrasek will celebrate 10 years of steadily growing her full-service IT and telecommunications business, but she is most interested in looking at what’s next.

“I founded the business in 2006, and I wouldn’t even say we are the same company,” says Vondrasek. “Our capabilities and services have had to evolve with enormous changes in technology and innovation. The IT industry is more complex now, and as a result, it’s an even bigger risk.”

In the last decade, Vondrasek has leveraged the WBENC network to make the most of connections and community available not only in her industry, but also in her Chicago region. She even admits to being impatient that the certification process took three to four months, receiving her WBENC-Certified status in 2007. Since then, she has been an advocate of her local RPO, the Women’s Business Development Center (WBDC-Chicago), and regularly attends WBENC’s national events.

“The level of empowerment you get when you’re surrounded by people who support you is extraordinary,” says Vondrasek. “The leadership in my industry is mostly male, and there are different obstacles as a woman leader that our male counterparts don’t ever see. You feel a little bit stronger about standing your ground when you have a community of other leaders who understand.”

This year, she was astounded and grateful when WBDC-Chicago leadership nominated her for the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women program. Although she quickly realized the “golden ticket” she had been offered, she also admits she didn’t know what to expect.

“I didn’t know about the EY program before I was nominated, and I can honestly say the program has been far more than I could have imagined,” says Vondrasek. “EY only chooses 12 women each year. With that kind of investment, they work to understand who you are and where to best align you in the program. They gave me a level of access to market trends and data that I didn’t have—and probably can’t afford—to help me set goals and build a company for the future.”

Building a foundation on data and research is pivotal for Von Technologies, especially in the IT and telecommunication industry’s “opportunity-rich” environment, and Vondrasek emphasizes that research-driven goals can be instrumental in leveraging business relationships.

“Most organizations have an inadequate infrastructure to support their businesses now,” says Vondrasek. “As we expand, we have to consider how to continue to help organizations focus on their business and not their network. We’ve achieved great success, and we have a plan for what’s next.”

Vondrasek is also excited about joining the WBENC’s Women Enterprise Forum. Her passion for helping other women-owned businesses is directly tied back to her experiences in the WBENC network.

“In terms of WBENC, you get out what you put in,” says Vondrasek. “You can’t just show up. If it were that easy, everyone would do it.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2015 EY WINNING WOMEN
FIAT CHRYSLER US MATCHMAKER PROGRAM CELEBRATES 16TH YEAR

The Fiat Chrysler US (FCA US) annual trade fair on September 17 in Auburn Hills, Michigan grew to more than 3,100 participants. More than 270 minority, women, veteran and majority-owned FCA U.S. suppliers participated in the day-long program matchmaker, which has generated more than $2.3 billion in new business opportunities for exhibitors since 2000.

“FCA US is committed to creating a diverse and sustainable supply base that directly reflects our customers,” said Tom Finelli, Vice President, NAFTA Purchasing and Supplier Quality, FCA US LLC. “Programs like Matchmaker enable FCA US to operate efficiently and sustainably, and to bring innovative new products to market that resonate with a diverse customer base. These programs also ensure that the economic benefits of our business are shared with members of our diverse communities.”

FCA US supplier diversity goals require that 11.5 percent of a Tier 1 supplier’s procurement buy be sourced to certified minority suppliers. The goal for women-owned suppliers is 3 percent. FCA US itself spent $2.6 billion with approximately 200 minority suppliers in 2014, representing 7.2 percent of the Company’s total annual purchasing. Since 1983, the Company has purchased nearly $53 billion from minority-owned suppliers.

Learn more about FCA US here.

ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY HOSTED EIGHTH ANNUAL SUPPLIER DIVERSITY EXCHANGE

Launched in 2008, the Allstate Supplier Diversity Exchange was created to provide an opportunity for businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender community to build relationships with Allstate and Allstate’s prime suppliers. It offers a forum for guidance as well as insight into the procurement world of large organizations. While attendance at this event does not guarantee business, since its inception, 130 participants have had the opportunity to compete for Allstate’s business, and 80 have successfully won contracts.

This year’s exchange was hosted on October 2 and the theme was “Network to Grow.” Fifty-four diverse companies attended and pitched their businesses to a panel of Allstate decision-makers and prime suppliers. In addition, five workshops were presented on topics that provided insight on how to do business with large companies like Allstate and best practices they can leverage to help operationalize their business.

WBE participants included ASAP Solutions Group LLC, KellyMitchell Group Inc., Creospan, T3, and Insights Marketing.

As an extension of the Exchange, Allstate also hosts quarterly webinars. These are designed to help suppliers increase their knowledge of how to do business with large corporations, specifically Allstate.

Learn more about Allstate’s Supplier Diversity Exchange here.

TOYOTA OPPORTUNITY EXCHANGE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Toyota has hosted its annual Opportunity Exchange for 26 years running – inviting Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBEs) to cultivate and strengthen relationships with Tier I (direct) suppliers at the free two-day event Nov. 9 and 10 at the Duke Energy Convention Center in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio.

“The Opportunity Exchange is a demonstration of Toyota’s genuine commitment to connect MWBEs with opportunities,” said Eric Ellis, president and
chief executive officer of Integrity Development. “Toyota is advocating for MWBEs and suppliers focused on building long-term relationships.”

The event began in 1989 with 300 attendees and has grown to nearly 2,000 people each year and has generated more than $250 million in contracts for MWBEs. The event includes seminars and panel discussions that focus on topics including how MWBEs and Tier I suppliers (both direct and indirect) can turn relationships into opportunities. Although OE is hosted by Toyota, MWBEs and Tier I suppliers often work on deals related to other automakers as well.

For more information, visit ToyotaOpportunityExchange.com.

MANPOWERGROUP’S 13TH ANNUAL SUPPLIER DIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE

ManpowerGroup’s 13th Annual Supplier Diversity Roundtable on October 6 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin brought together more than 160 diverse suppliers from across the United States and globally including minority, veteran, LGBT, small- and women-owned staffing and procurement businesses. The roundtable is a best-in-class event for business owners to strengthen their relationships with ManpowerGroup leaders, network with peers, and learn and grow as business owners.

Sessions with ManpowerGroup leaders and industry experts covered topics including contingent workforce trends, employee engagement, and employer branding. WBE participants included ICON Information Consultants, Rose International, KellyMitchell Group, VIVA USA, Inc., and OLSA Resources, Inc.

In addition, ManpowerGroup hosted an awards dinner to recognize winners of the ManpowerGroup Supplier Excellence Award. Suppliers earn the award based on exceptional performance in overall spend and number of accounts, performance metrics and overall partnership. The 2015 ManpowerGroup Supplier Excellence Award honorees included WBE OLSA Resources, Inc.

For more information about ManpowerGroup’s supplier diversity initiatives in the U.S., click here.

LEADING WRIGHT

At the October 6 awards gala, Manpower Group awarded the 2015 President’s Award to Kip Wright, senior vice president, Manpower, North America.

“Supplier diversity is a big focus at ManpowerGroup, so I am honored to receive this award,” said Wright. “ManpowerGroup prides itself on partnering with ethical and diverse companies, and events such as this roundtable provide us with dedicated time to focus on building relationships and sharing ideas. Through this collaboration, we can help strengthen the economic wealth of our diverse business communities.”

Read more about Kip Wright on his leadership blog, “Leading Wright.”
The graduation event, which took place in Providence, Rhode Island on Monday, November 2, was part of a larger ceremony honoring exemplary supplier diversity leaders among CVS Health suppliers, customers, and internal advocates.

Pamela Prince-Eason, President and CEO of WBENC, who spoke at the event, said, “[The] CVS Health Executive Education Program is an outstanding opportunity for WBEs to deepen their procurement and management skills and present their value proposition to the CVS Health stakeholders.”

With over 160 hours of education, the program was structured as an innovative hybrid of face-to-face meetings and online education that covered a comprehensive array of business competencies such as information technology, legal, human resources, logistics, merchandising, budget, and finance.

In the first quarter of 2016, each of the graduates will conclude the program with a five-hour mentoring meeting with a Roger Williams University professor. Then they will be matched with CVS Health procurement officers or business heads to discuss potential business opportunities.

“The program was very well received. We were extremely pleased with the participants and intend to conduct a new class in 2016,” says Raul
Suarez-Rodriguez, Manager of Supplier Diversity and Strategic Procurement for CVS Health.

There were 144 applicants attracted from a number of organizations, including the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council (NMSDC), the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC®), the United States Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce (USPAACC), and the U.S. Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®), among others.

The 10 businesses that were selected represented a variety of industries at various stages of growth. Several of the WBEs also spoke to how the program’s content aligned with their corporate values and promoted internal development.

Cheryl Snead, President and CEO of Banneker Industries, was one of those selected. Headquartered in Rhode Island with operations in key states across the country, Banneker is a world-class supplier of third- and fourth-party logistics services, including value-added warehousing, procurement, inspection, kitting, packaging and fulfillment, distribution, and onsite services.

As a supplier to CVS Health in “our own backyard,” says Snead, she shared the reference materials and assignments in the program with her key staff. She saw this as an inspirational challenge in surfacing new ways to market their services and expand their networks. The program content and thought-provoking assignments were so instructive that some of the outcomes will be included in Banneker’s upcoming strategic plan.

“The program was very comprehensive. We learned so much—from the process of responding to RFPs, RFQs, and RFIs to business strategies and sustainability. We also learned how vital social media was in reinforcing messages about issues that are so important to us, such as using healthy and ethically sourced ingredients.”

“Cheryl Snead, President and CEO of Banneker Industries.”

“This was an opportunity to make our current and future leaders better educated and to uplift our company as well,” says Snead.

Nhora Barrera Murphy, President and CEO of The Media Network, doing business as TMNcorp, provides innovative solutions in marketing, advertising, branding, and strategic communications through expertly coordinated media. She said that her interest in health as a focus of behavioral change communications was a strong motivation to apply for the program.

“Our values in communications are aligned with preventative health,” says Murphy. “This program was comprehensive in terms of every aspect of business management. And we can learn more about how to contribute to CVS Health as a supplier.”

Liz Flaherty is CFO/COO for Aromafloria, which has been creating aromatherapy bath products for over 25 years. Aromafloria maintains a certified organic facility and ensures that all ingredients are carefully sourced from fair trade markets worldwide. Aromafloria has sold a variety of their...
aromatherapy products at CVS Health over the past 10 years.

“The program was very comprehensive,” says Flaherty. “We learned so much—from the process of responding to RFPs, RFQs, and RFIs to business strategies and sustainability. We also learned how vital social media was in reinforcing messages about issues that are so important to us, such as using healthy and ethically sourced ingredients.”

Other WBEs included Barbara Wichmann, CEO, Artémia Communications, Inc.; Nancy A. Williams, Principal/Owner, ASAP Solutions Group LLC; Rocky Fremin, President, Fremin’s Contractor Services, LLC; Liz Choi, Sales, Five Thousand Forms, Inc.; Francine Friedman Griesing, Managing Member, Griesing Law, LLC; and Lois Gamerman, President and CEO at Soft Stuff Distributors, Inc.

“This program shows how WBEs can learn continuously and enhance their competitiveness,” says Susan Rittscher, President and CEO of the Center for Women and Enterprise, a Regional Partner Organization of WBENC.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAM, VISIT CVSHEALTH.COM

1 (Front Row from L to R): Liz Choi, Five Thousand Forms; Liz Flaherty, Aromafloria; Jeff Hall, Second to None; Barbara Myrick, B&M Construction; Bob Gamerman, Soft Stuff Distributors; Donna Childs, Prisere LLC. (Back Row from L to R): Cheryl Snead, Banneker; Barbara Wichmann, Artémia; Lois Gamerman, Soft Stuff Distributors; Nancy Williams, ASAP Solutions Group

2 (From L to R): Cheryl Snead, President and CEO of Banneker Industries; a professor from Roger Williams University; and Pamela Prince-Eason, WBENC President and CEO

3 In the classroom at CVS Health

4 Group shot at CVS Health

5 Raul Suarez-Rodriguez, Manager, Supplier Diversity/Strategic Procurement, CVS Health; and Robert Hernandez, VP of Sales from Solo Printing Inc.
CLIMBING TO THE SUMMIT
EARLY BIRD DEADLINE • JANUARY 22, 2016
MARCH 22 - 24, 2016
REGISTRATION OPEN
summit.wbenc.org

PRESENTING SPONSORS:
accenture
EY
AMPCUS
The Insurance Diversity Initiative was established by Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones in 2011 to address diversity issues within California’s $259 billion insurance industry. Specifically, these efforts are meant to increase procurement from California’s diverse suppliers, as well as to increase diversity among insurer governing boards.

“We worked hard to raise awareness of the importance about paying attention to your supply chain,” says Klinsport. “I’ve been committed to attending the summit, supporting the work of the CDI and consulting with supplier diversity colleagues who have called on me. When I began my role in supplier diversity I was fortunate to have joined the industry group, the Financial Services Roundtable for Supplier Diversity. The support and advice of my industry group contemporaries was, and still is, invaluable”

Klinsport has been working with and directing supplier diversity programs with Allstate since 2003, and she is committed to sustainable programs that help diverse businesses, including WBEs, reach the access they need to pitch for business.

“Allstate is successful because of the multi-layered approach to supplier diversity that Margaret has implemented,” says Jones. “Their program includes everything from matchmaking sessions and an internal awards program to, most notably, the mentorship and training programs they offer to diverse suppliers.”

Klinsport served as a speaker during the summit and continues to mentor colleagues who are now working to build supplier diversity programs.

“The more people involved in supplier diversity, the better,” says Klinsport. “The state of California has a sincere commitment to creating opportunities for diverse suppliers and they understand the importance of staying ahead of their changing business demographics.”

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALLSTATE’S SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

MARGARET KLINSSPORT, DIRECTOR OF SUPPLIER DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AT ALLSTATE, WAS RECENTLY HONORED WITH THE SUPPLIER DIVERSITY TRAILBLAZER AWARD AT THE 4TH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE (CDI) DIVERSITY SUMMIT ON NOVEMBER 4, 2015. IN ADDITION TO HER WORK BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN CALIFORNIA, KLINSPORT WAS AWARDED FOR HER WILLINGNESS TO BE A RESOURCE TO THE CDI AND OTHERS AS A SUPPLIER DIVERSITY INDUSTRY EXPERT.
ELEVEN HONOREES INDUCTED INTO THE WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE HALL OF FAME

The Women’s Business Enterprise Hall of Fame celebrated and recognized a new group of women entrepreneurs and those that value their contributions during a ceremony held in Dallas, Texas earlier this month. The honorees were applauded for their excellence in entrepreneurship, leadership, and mentorship.

Many members of the WBENC community were among the inductees, including the following:

Benita Fortner, the outgoing WBENC Board Chair as well as the director of supplier diversity for Raytheon Co., was inducted as one of the 2015 Corporate Advocates.

Lynn Boccio of Avis Budget Group and WBENC Board Member was inducted as the other 2016 Corporate Advocates.

Blanca Robinson, the outgoing president of the Women’s Business Enterprise Council South was inducted as the 2015 Advocate, recognizing her 17 years of ongoing support for WBEs.

WBENC-Certified WBEs Karlee Co. Inc. and SB Services Inc. were inducted as the 2015 Women’s Business Enterprises.

The WBE Hall of Fame is a nonprofit organization launched in 2009 to recognize the contributions of women entrepreneurs in their communities, as well as their accomplishments within their industries. Through a network of women’s business development organizations, corporate and government advocates, and women-owned enterprises, the WBEHF spotlights best practices and insights that help women create businesses that help build a stronger economy.

Learn more here.

1 Honoree Benita Fortner, WBENC Board Chair and Director of Supplier Diversity, Raytheon with presenter Jim Holloway, Supplier Relations General Manager, Toyota

2 Honoree Blanca Robinson, outgoing president of the Women’s Business Enterprise Council-South with presenter Debbie Hurst, President of Women’s Business Council-Southwest

3 Honoree Lynn Boccio, WBENC Board Member and Vice President, Strategic Business & Diversity Relations, Avis Budget Group with presenter William J. Alcorn
FOCUS ON THE FORUM

AN EYE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS:
SHELLEE FISHER PHOTOGRAPHY

WHEN SHELLEE FISHER LAUNCHED HER PHOTOGRAPHY BUSINESS SEVEN YEARS AGO, SHE WAS REKINDLING A PASSION SHE’D HAD SINCE SHE WAS A YOUNG ADULT. FOR 20 YEARS, SHE HEADED HER OWN XEROX OFFICE EQUIPMENT COMPANY, WHILE DONATING HER TIME AND TALENTS AS THE “OFFICIAL UNOFFICIAL VOLUNTEER” PHOTOGRAPHER FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. SO, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO MAKE THE LEAP TO HER DREAM BUSINESS, SHE WAS READY WITH BOTH A CREATIVE RESUME AND A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE IN RUNNING A BUSINESS.

Shelee Fisher Photography LLC provides photography and videography services for corporations and nonprofit, civic, and political organizations. Since becoming WBENC-Certified in 2011, the company has experienced steady growth.

Fisher credits her Regional Partner Organization, the Ohio River Valley Women’s Business Council (ORV-WBC), for opening the door to multiple contacts and procurement opportunities. She immediately immersed herself in the network, attending as many events and luncheons as she could in Columbus and Dayton. After building a reputation as an engaged and committed business owner, ORV-WBC recommended Fisher for the Forum, which she enthusiastically joined. Currently, she serves on the Marketing Committee.

Fisher believes that in addition to the Women’s Enterprise Forum representing the voice of all women in business, “Face time is the best time. If you don’t show up, how will they get to know you?”
WBEs, a key benefit of the Forum is to give WBEs the chance to share their business stories, awards, and accomplishments with other women in the room who are potential customers, partners, and friends. “The Forum environment is exhilarating and a vital platform for business development,” she says.

On the national level, Fisher has attended the last two Summit & Salute events and the last three National Conference & Business Fairs. She believes that being there in person to meet the corporations and WBEs is essential to breaking down the barriers of distance.

“Face time is the best time,” says Fisher. “If you don’t show up, how will they get to know you?” Her track record supports this point of view. Among the WBENC Corporate Members she has performed photography services for, are Nationwide, Honda North America, Inc., and L Brands.

The women’s business leader executive portraits she has done include Tara Abraham, Chairman and Co-CEO of Accel Inc.; Sally Hughes, President and CEO of Caster Connections; Angela Horn, CEO of MediaScript llc; and Darla King, President of King Business Interiors.

Her proudest accomplishment was being awarded the photography contract for the WBENC National Conference & Business Fair in Austin in 2015. “It was monumental for me,” says Fisher. “I had wanted to cover the National Conference since I first became WBENC-Certified. It was so exciting for me to photographically document all the speakers, events, and ambiance, and showcase what a great conference it was.”

“I had wanted to cover the National Conference since I first became WBENC-Certified. It was so exciting for me to photographically document all the speakers, events, and ambiance, and showcase what a great conference it was.”

Fisher has worked with other organizations in the women’s and diversity space for a number of years and believes this has added to her ability to connect effectively to her clients. Her work is known for capturing the essence of a situation, she believes, and the emotion of the moment.

Fisher hopes that her strength in telling stories through positive imagery serves her WBENC and ORV-WBC clients in reaching their business goals. “It’s important to not only document activities but also to show relationships to the environment and each other,” she says.

Fisher is a member of the American Society of Media Photographers, Professional Photographers of America, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), and the Women for Economic & Leadership Development (WELD). Her awards include the MBE Supplier of the Year for South Central Ohio Minority Suppliers Development Council.

“It’s exciting for women’s businesses to make connections that lead to a community like WBENC. It fuels our business growth,” says Fisher.

www.shelleefisher.com

1 The WBENC Team poses for Shellee Fisher Photography onstage at the 2015 National Conference & Business Fair
2-3 WBENC 2015 National Conference & Business Fair images by Shellee Fisher
4 Shellee Fisher, Founder, Shellee Fisher Photography
#BuyWomenOwned

Proudly supporting those who support Women Owned businesses

Bringing consumer recognition to products supplied by Women Owned companies

Learn more at www.womenownedlogo.com
COMPANY AT-A-GLANCE

Company Name: Jen & Joe’s Cookie Dough
Founded: 2011
WBENC-Certified: 2013
Headquartered: Los Angeles, CA
Website: www.jenandjoes.com
Social Media: @jenandjoes

Slogan: Ingredients So Good They’re on the Front
Retail: Winn-Dixie, Safeway, Vons, Pavilions, Whole Foods, Randalls, Tom Thumb, Bristol Farms, Rouses, Ralph’s, Raley’s Supermarkets, Busch’s, Pete’s Fresh Market in Chicago, and Harmon’s

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Jen has always loved baking. As a toddler, she baked bread with her mother—though her mother claims that Jen just played in the flour. At seven, Jen learned fractions from baking chocolate chip cookies. As an adult, Jen went to pastry school and learned how to bake all sorts of treats. But cookies have always been her passion.

Jen loves inventing interesting cookie flavors and sharing them with friends and family. Eventually, folks started requesting Jen’s cookies at dinner parties and special events. It was easy for Jen to accommodate even last-minute requests because she had discovered a secret: cookie dough can be frozen into individual servings and then baked in any number—even one at a time!

Now Jen is bringing her frozen cookie dough to you.

“Being a part of WBENC has given me the chance to meet supplier diversity teams in the food industry. It has helped open doors and given my business invaluable opportunities. Thank you!”

ABOUT THE PRODUCTS

Gourmet home-style cookie dough. Frozen into individual servings and ready to bake anytime. Always real eggs and butter. Never any artificial colors, flavors, additives, or preservatives. Available in a mix of classic flavors, such as Snickerdoodle and Chocolate Chunk, and inventive ones such as White Chocolate Wasabi, Lemon Drop, Chocolate Spice, and Oatmeal Toffee.
Twelve-six years later, the award-winning Natalie’s Orchid Island Juice Company has 13 juice varieties, with multiple citrus and vegetable offerings from classic orange juice to beet orange and even a fresh tomato juice and margarita mix. Available globally, Natalie’s juices can be found everywhere from their home state of Florida to Saudi Arabia to Japan.

“Being a woman-owned and family-operated company, we are intentional with how we source our fruits and vegetables, ensuring we squeeze only the highest quality juices with no artificial ingredients, no preservatives, no concentrates, and no GMOs,” says owner and CEO Marygrace. “My daughters, Natalie and Lucy, were raised with the company mission, and my belief that in today’s world, you have to be conscientious about the food you consume. We make our juices to fit those high standards.”

Marygrace is proud of both her daughters’ independent, creative spirits, yet she never expected that her little girl in the red wagon would be just as eager to join the family-owned business and work to elevate the humble company vision.
and mission: “Make fresh juices that we would feed our own families.”

Today, her oldest daughter, Natalie, is the director of marketing for her namesake juice company, which has been featured on the TODAY Show and in magazines like *Cook’s Illustrated*, *Real Simple*, *Bon Appetit*, and *Good Housekeeping*.

“I respected [my mother’s] vision and purpose for the company, which is why it was such an easy decision to come work along side her and her team at age 23,” says Natalie. “In this day in age, you really don’t see family-owned businesses committed to putting the consumer first. It is our responsibility to make juices that are a source of authentic nutrition.”

As part of her work on the team, Natalie discovered third-party certification in 2013 through the company’s customers, and worked to get the company WBENC-Certified in 2014. In 2015, the Natalie’s team attended both signature WBENC events: the Summit & Salute in Baltimore and the National Conference & Business Fair in Austin.

“The WBENC Certification and the Women Owned logo reinforces the fact that there are trusted people behind the brand making your juice. We hope the logo and certification will help us capitalize on new opportunities and growing knowledge of the WBENC network. But we also chose to become a WBENC-Certified business to further encourage and promote other women business owners.”

Both mother and daughter note that transparency is a core value of the company’s ongoing success. Consumer trust is not something they take lightly, especially as they hope to find resources to continue growing the company while maintaining the commitment to using local produce and maintaining freshness.

“Making the highest quality squeezed fresh juice was, and is, a difficult niche market,” says Marygrace. “Building a business from nothing is not easy, and I knew if I ever eased up on my commitment to excellence in quality and customer service I would be settling for failure instead of what made the company what it is today. Getting high-quality Florida fruit during and outside of the harvest months takes strict planning and budgeting. Squeezing and shipping the same day takes persistence and tenacity.”

With those values in mind, Marygrace and Natalie are excited about the company’s future with the WBENC network and leveraging the Women Owned logo.

“The Women Owned logo certifies our commitment to the consumer that we put all of our time and resources into building a transparent company that squeezes authentic nutrition,” says Marygrace.
THE WBENC SHOP

ESSENTIALS - WBENC COLLECTION
Make a statement with the premier line of WBENC signature products. Engage our community and share the WBENC brand when you travel. See the WBENC Collection during the National Conference & Business Fair to select items that fit your personal style. You can also view and purchase additional products today online at shopwbenc.com.

- Pebble Grain Zippered Portfolio W/ Calculator
- Executive Rhinestone Pens
- Wine Carrier & Purse
- Alexis Nylon Purse Style
- Wine Tote Bag
- Bling Mugs
- 16 Oz Tervis Tumbler
- Sling Backpacks
- Tervis Water Bottle

WBNFC
Join Forces, Succeed Together.
shopwbenc.com
As of October 14, contracting officers are authorized to award sole source contracts to WOSBs and economically disadvantaged WOSBs (EDWOSBs). A sole source contract is also known as a “no-bid” contract, which is utilized when there is only one person/company that can provide the product/service needed—yielding only one submission if the project is posted for bid. Awards, under the new rule, are limited to the same NAICS codes of which WOSB/EDWOSB set asides are authorized.

The same stipulations apply to the sole source award, as set asides: (1) the WOSB or EDWOSB is a responsible contractor; (2) the contracting officer does not have a reasonable expectation that two or more WOSBs or EDWOSBs will submit offers; and (3) award can be made at a fair and reasonable price. In contrast to the set asides authorized, contract limits of $4 million ($6.5 million for manufacturing) have been reintroduced for the sole source contract to be awarded.

“Sole source is a giant leap forward for WOSBs,” says Candace Waterman, WBENC Chief of Staff. “However, the work has just begun. WOSBs should be up-to-date on these rule changes when pursuing relationships with government agencies.”

WOSBs are encouraged to understand the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) when approaching contracting officers, and be able to bring light to the new ruling. They should also reach out to the procurement center representative to advocate on their behalf. The SBA is committed to educating the contracting officers; however, a little advocacy can go a long way.

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING SITES:

www.sba.gov/wosb
www.wbenc.org/government
WHAT IS THE WBENC ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM?

- Tailored entrepreneur curriculum for 25 female collegiate students, pitch competition, and mentoring from the most successful Women’s Business Enterprises and America’s largest Fortune 500 companies.
- Exposure to nearly 4,000 attendees at the WBENC National Conference & Business Fair.
- Attendance is FREE for those accepted including conference, travel, lodging and expenses.

APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 11, 2016

To apply, visit http://www.wbenc.org/student-entrepreneur-program or contact Andrew Gaeckle, Senior Manager, Strategic Programs and Operations, at agaeckle@wbenc.org.
When WBENC-Certified Women's Business Enterprises (WBES) get together, the atmosphere is electric. WBES share information and connect as potential business partners, alliances and subcontractors.

In an event that captured that energy, the recent WBE2WBE MatchMaking sessions in Washington, D.C., provided the opportunity for WBES to connect across industries.

“MatchMaking ignites tremendous opportunities for WBES to intentionally increase their spend with other WBES and create a robust supplier base for their clients. We are excited to bring WBES together in this way and welcome the success stories of the economic impact that follow,” says Candace Waterman, WBENC Chief of Staff, Certification & Program Operations.

Caren Schweitzer, President of Creative Resources, is an enthusiastic advocate of working with WBES. “On a national level, we can learn from and support each other. We all bring something different to the table, and there is tremendous opportunity for us to utilize each other’s expertise.”

Schweitzer says her clients encourage her to source women and diverse businesses in fulfilling national contracts. “This is one of my personal goals. Together, we can support WBENC and break the glass ceiling for female suppliers,” says Schweitzer.

Creative Resources creates high impact branded merchandise designed to elevate brands and engage target audiences. Seeking to reduce redundant layers in the supply chain, it serves multinational B2B and B2C corporations, educational institutions and government agencies worldwide.

Amy Criss, Director of Women Business Enterprise Sales at 84 Lumber, which is WBENC-Certified, was sourcing WBES at the MatchMaking event. “There is no better person to help women’s businesses than another woman business owner. 84 Lumber’s President, Maggie Hardy Magerko, faced the challenge of heading up a nontraditional business for women. For a long time, she was the only woman in the room. Today she wants to help other WBES. We believe it is a ‘hand up, not a hand out,’” says Criss.

Magerko’s company, 84 Lumber, is the nation’s leading privately-held building materials supplier to professional contractors, home builders, remodelers and do-it-yourselfers. Magerko took over the reins of 84 Lumber in the 1990s from her father, John Hardy III. Under her leadership, the company greatly expanded its business in the professional building market, operates more than 250 stores, and employs more than 4,200 associates.

The message is clear for the more than 13,000 WBENC-Certified WBES: there is a world of opportunities for WBES to do business with each other.
WBENC STAFF ATTENDS VETS ROCK

FULL-DAY, ONE-OF-A-KIND EVENT THAT BOTH CELEBRATED AND SUPPORTED OUR VETERANS. VETS ROCK WAS HOSTED BY THE MOHEGAN SUN CASINO IN CONNECTICUT, WITH THE MISSION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY PROVIDING OUR VETERANS WITH VALUABLE RESOURCES ALONG WITH WORLD-CLASS ENTERTAINMENT IN CELEBRATION OF VETERANS DAY.

“As the daughter and sister of several veterans I have witnessed firsthand the importance of supporting our veterans as they return to civilian life,” says Pamela Prince-Eason, President and CEO of WBENC. “Events like Vets Rock provide incredible resources to our veterans; the opportunities created here today with all of our partners create an immense impact for not only our heroes, but their families and their communities. Our veterans sacrificed and served our nation—it is important for us to serve them as well as they served us.”

Throughout the day, veterans were invited to participate in a career fair, a supplier diversity opportunity fair, workshops, and an auction. The career fair featured over 100 employers from throughout the state of Connecticut, and the supplier diversity opportunity fair provided access to organizations such as WBENC, WPEO-NY, and the SBA for those veterans who are either currently business owners or considering starting a business. The veterans also had the opportunity to use resources such as résumé workshops, suit fittings, music and art therapy, legal affairs for veterans, and a series of breakout sessions.

At 11:11 a.m., a moving opening ceremony included remarks from Kevin Brown, the
Chairman of the Mohegan Sun, Justin Nash, the Founder and Chairman of Til Duty Is Done, and remarks from other supporting organizations. The ceremony closed with a special recognition of veterans from the Vietnam War era, including WBENC’s own Pat Birmingham, Vice President of Marketing.

In the afternoon, Prince-Eason joined a panel to discuss the future of veteran certification. Currently, veteran-owned businesses follow a verification process and have no single government or third-party organizations to turn to, apart from the Vets First Contracting Program for contracts directly with the Veterans Affairs office.

In the public sector, there is currently no consensus around veteran-owned businesses. Some corporations rely on the government’s verification process, some ask for a veteran’s Department of Defense Form 214, and other corporations do not include veterans as a segment in their supplier diversity program. The panel discussed how a veteran certification process could impact opportunities for veteran business enterprises. In addition, the panel provided information to veterans in the audience who were considering the different opportunities available to them as business owners.

“Veterans’ experiences are different from civilians; the perspectives and training they bring both as employees and as business owners is valuable. We hope to see even more veteran business enterprises in the coming years, while ensuring they receive the support and network available to other diverse suppliers,” says Prince-Eason.

After a full day of creating opportunities for veterans, Vets Rock put on quite the show in the Mohegan Sun Arena. Emceed by Tony Orlando, the concert honored our fallen heroes and thanked our veterans for their services. The patriotic show, headlined by Trace Adkins, also included incredible performances by the Dropkick Murphys and Madison Rising.

It was an inspiring day filled with respect, opportunity, and support.

“Events like Vets Rock provide incredible resources to our veterans; the opportunities created here today with all of our partners create an immense impact for not only our heroes, but their families and their communities. Our veterans sacrificed and served our nation—it is important for us to serve them as well as they served us.”
The 2015 CWE Women Business Leaders Conference from October 22 to 23, 2015 was a day of learning, reflection, and connections featuring workshops led by industry experts, a Business Expo Fair, and a unique speed-mentoring session. The conference drew a record-breaking 575 business professionals dedicated to empowering women in business.

In addition to CWE’s annual awards luncheon honoring friends and clients of CWE for their commitment to supporting women in business, special sessions included roundtable discussions on how to leverage certification, one-on-ones with WBENC Corporate Members, and the launch of the 2015-15 CWE-WBENC Corporate Mentor Program featuring seven mentor/mentee relationships.

Featured speakers at this year’s event included Joanna Meiseles, Founder of Snipits, Helen Greiner, Co-Founder of iRobot, and Robin Chase, Co-Founder of Zipcar.

LEARN MORE AT CWEONLINE.ORG.

More than $100,000 was raised to provide training and support for local women entrepreneurs at the Women’s Business Enterprise Council PA-DE-SNJ (WBEC) 20th Anniversary combined with WBEC’s annual fundraiser “Just Desserts” – Celebrating the Sweet Success of Women Business Owners, Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at the Union League of Philadelphia.

More than 250 attendees feasted on the delectable desserts contributed by women-owned restaurants, bakeries and caterers including Bredenbeck’s Bakery, Metropolitan Bakery, PARC restaurant and Sweet Street Desserts, Inc.

Pamela Prince-Eason, MAS, CPSM, President & CEO, Women’s Business Enterprise National Council, was the Mistress of Ceremonies and introduced...
The winners of the 2015 Done Deals™ Challenge, representing contracts completed between certified Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) and corporate members in the Washington, D.C. region, were announced Thursday, November 5 at the Women Presidents’ Educational Organization (WPEO) annual Washington, D.C. Breakthrough Breakfast and Procurement Fair. WPEO-DC also celebrated its 15th Anniversary at the event.

A total of 10,752 contracts were completed among WBEs and corporate members during the challenge period from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, a whopping 96.8% increase since last year.

THE 2015 DONE DEALS AWARD WINNERS:

**CORPORATE CHAMPION AWARD** Dominion

**CORPORATE MEMBER WITH THE HIGHEST CUMULATIVE VALUE OF DONE DEALS WITH WPEO CERTIFIED WBEs**

**CORPORATE OPPORTUNITY AWARD** Sodexo and Pepco Holdings, Inc.

TIED FOR THE MOST DONE DEALS WITH WPEO-CERTIFIED WBES

**THE 2015 DONE DEALS AWARD WINNERS:**

1. (From L to R): Pamela Prince-Eason, President of WBENC; Nancy L. Swartout, Planning & Reporting Manager, Exxon Mobil; Geri Swift, President, WBEC PA-DE-sNJ; Peggy Del Fabbro, CEO, M. Davis & Sons, Inc.

2. (From L to R): Pamela Prince-Eason, President of WBENC, Linda Gloss, Chair of WBEC; Laura Kasper, President/CEO, Monarch Staffing; Gregory Redden, Region President and Event Chair, Wells Fargo; Natasha Turner, Owner, The Learning Train Academy; Vivian Isaak, President and Founder, Magnum Group; Geri Swift, President, WBEC PA-DE-sNJ
THE WOMEN’S BUSINESS COUNCIL – SOUTHWEST (WBCS)
20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Women’s Business Council – Southwest (WBCS) has been in a celebratory mood throughout 2015 and has acknowledged its 20th anniversary in special ways at each of its major events. To cap off the year, WBCS hosted a Texas-sized 20th Anniversary Celebration on November 6 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. The night highlighted the corporations, members, and staff who have assisted WBCS with its tremendous growth and success over the past two decades. The lively affair featured gourmet food, auction, casino games, live music and dancing.

LEARN MORE AT WBCSOUTHWEST.ORG.
The Greater Women’s Business Council, Inc. (GWBC), the leading provider of certification and development resources for certified Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, hosted its annual LACE Awards on November 12 at Atlanta’s Fox Theatre. The annual black tie affair was hosted to honor women-owned businesses and corporations for their high-spirited commitment and outstanding contributions to supplier excellence.

Hundreds of business leaders gathered to honor and celebrate the nominees and winners in a variety of categories.

The Clorox Company won Corporation of the Year, SONOCO snagged the coveted VOICE Award and Deborah Mackins of Georgia Power was named Corporate Advocate of the Year. Also with Georgia Power, Angela Ferguson won Buyer of the Year. SPARK Publications received the Category I Trailblazer Award, PeopleSourcer took Category II Trailblazer Award and Category IV Trailblazer Award went to PS Energy. XIOSS’ Susie Galyardt was named Volunteer of the Year for Georgia and Innolect’s Kami Wickham was named Volunteer of the Year for the Carolinas.

LEARN MORE AT GWBC.BIZ.
Isn’t it time to start your Legacy®?

Order Your WBENC Legacy® Online
www.thedwgroup.com/wbenclegacy
1-800-704-0546

WBENC has created the Legacy Bracelet as a statement of your participation and ongoing support of our organization.

Each beautiful hand-crafted sterling silver bead represents different aspects of WBENC that have made it the progressive and respected organization that it is today.

Whether you are new to certification, membership or supplier diversity and women’s entrepreneurship, you can build your own beautiful piece of jewelry that will tell the story of how you’re engaged with WBENC.

Isn’t it time to start your Legacy®?
Q: As we look ahead to the new year, how do you work with your team to review goals?

As we prepare for the new year at Corporate Fitness Works, we set goals with all our business units and each of our team leaders. During that discussion, we follow up with quarterly sessions we call Goal Progression Meetings. At these meetings, we review and adjust goals as necessary based on business needs. As part of our core values, we succeed together by recording and celebrating all goals completed.

Allison Flatley      
COO, Corporate Fitness Works  
www.corporatefitnessworks.com

Our redefined 2016 business strategy is posted and reviewed company-wide, so every employee in our company is positioned to achieve our goals for profitable growth and market expansion. Every employee of LEM Products Inc. is aware of measurable objectives, and incentive plans are built around achieving the goal! Goals are posted and daily results are available to all personnel.

Maureen O’Connor      
CEO, LEM Products Inc.  
www.lemproductsinc.com

The management team looks five years ahead. Dream big, see opportunities, and talk about innovation and possibilities. Where will our customers be; how can we anticipate their needs? Then we look to the next year and detail-plan. For alignment, we share a one-page business plan with all staff members and new employees. We track and adjust the goals monthly.

Hannah Kain      
President & CEO, ALOM  
www.alom.com

The individuals working within Hunter Hawk have entrepreneurial attributes and qualities that beg continuous review of company goals as a personal and team activity. Weekly staff meetings help keep existing and future goals in sight. Respect for each individual’s idea and opinion makes goal review a weekly vs. annual process—an ongoing, healthy part of our company’s core.

Sandy Hunter      
Owner and President, Hunter Hawk Inc.  
www.hunterhawk.com

As we look ahead to the new year, how do you work with your team to review goals?

Answer:

The management team looks five years ahead. Dream big, see opportunities, and talk about innovation and possibilities. Where will our customers be; how can we anticipate their needs? Then we look to the next year and detail-plan. For alignment, we share a one-page business plan with all staff members and new employees. We track and adjust the goals monthly.

Hannah Kain      
President & CEO, ALOM  
www.alom.com

As we prepare for the new year at Corporate Fitness Works, we set goals with all our business units and each of our team leaders. During that discussion, we follow up with quarterly sessions we call Goal Progression Meetings. At these meetings, we review and adjust goals as necessary based on business needs. As part of our core values, we succeed together by recording and celebrating all goals completed.

Allison Flatley      
COO, Corporate Fitness Works  
www.corporatefitnessworks.com

Our redefined 2016 business strategy is posted and reviewed company-wide, so every employee in our company is positioned to achieve our goals for profitable growth and market expansion. Every employee of LEM Products Inc. is aware of measurable objectives, and incentive plans are built around achieving the goal! Goals are posted and daily results are available to all personnel.

Maureen O’Connor      
CEO, LEM Products Inc.  
www.lemproductsinc.com

As a virtual team, we conduct quarterly face-to-face goal-setting sessions to review, assess, and recalibrate our priorities, and to

1. Focus on our vital few goals to support our vision, mission, and values.
2. Assess overall/individual goals and metrics to offer praise and improvement feedback.
3. Check for alignment with strategy (processes, people, and technology).
4. Problem-solve to improve/innovate for future success.

Kittie Watson, Ph.D.      
President, Innolect Inc.  
www.innolectinc.com

Upcoming Question:

“What’s the most important hiring decision you’ve made?”

Send your answer to wbenc-news@wbenc.org. Your response could appear on these pages. Please limit your answer to 60 words.
NEW ON INSIGHTS!

GETTING STARTED WITH WOMEN OWNED

This seven-minute webinar reviews the history of the Women Owned logo and how WBES can use the logo. The webinar answers frequently asked questions such as, “Who can use the logo?”, “How do I best use the logo?”, and “What opportunities may exist for WBES?”

WHAT IS INSIGHTS?

Insights is a cloud-based resource library that allows WBENC-Certified WBES, Regional Partner Organizations, and Corporate and Government Members to access information when and where they need it—from any Internet-connected device. The resource library offers content on industry forecasts, procurement trends, government contracting, and skill building for WBENC-Certified WBES and best practices on supplier diversity and resources for sustainable diversity programs for WBENC Corporate Members.

NEW TO INSIGHTS?

Email your name, company name, telephone number, and title to insights@wbenc.org. You can learn more about navigating Insights here.

HAVE YOUR INSIGHTS ACCOUNT?

Access Insights here.

ALSO AVAILABLE ON INSIGHTS:

Government Contracting Series—the series shares the value of women-owned small business certification, how to best leverage capabilities for government contracts, and how best to navigate government agencies.

WBE Capacity and Skill Building Series—this series provides WBES the opportunity to hear from experts on various topics to provide valuable insights on business and opportunities.

And more!