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Message from the President

By Ida B. Brooker

CATCH UP TIME

As is the case from time to time, we have several items we need to catch up on. First of all, you should know that our mail delivery service lost over two weeks of mail at the end of October. Normally, that would not be a problem but as that is membership renewal time, we lost checks and renewal notices. If you are waiting for a new membership card and you have not received it, it may well be because your renewal notice was lost. Please go to your bank or credit card statements and determine if your accounts have been charged for your renewal. If not, please process another payment for your renewal and print a membership notice from the website with your information filled out. Your assistance would be appreciated.

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WCOE

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WCOE Annual Meeting in Washington D.C.

Our Annual Meeting is March 19-22, 2006 in Washington D.C. If you have not registered, now is the time! This year's meeting is going to be a huge success. We have an exciting panel of speakers to discuss hot topics on Capital Hill, contract opportunities, procurement issues and legislative issues. Our invited keynote speaker is Senator Olympia Snowe (Chairwoman of the Senate Small Business Committee). Other meeting events include a briefing with the Office of Homeland Security, a panel of OSDBU Offices from the Department of Energy, the Post Office and Justice to talk about construction contracting opportunities and a session on "Branding: Standout from the Crowd". By attending the Annual Meeting, you will also learn how to meet with elected officials and impact laws which effect your business.

The Willard Hotel is once again the conference site, but rooms will be released if not booked by February 17, 2006. Please do not delay in registering for the conference. To register, fill out the registration form attached to this newsletter and fax it to 650-551-5584 or call Deborah Wilder at 650-551-5583 for more information.

Note from the President:

Please email Ida at idabrooker@wcoeusa.org by March 1st with any issues of concern that need to be addressed at the next board meeting.

Registration Form: Last page of this newsletter.

Message from the President

(continued)

Have you made reservations for the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in March? If you have not, you better hurry. Almost all the rooms have been reserved and space is going to be tight. Be sure you register for the conference with Deborah Wilder's office and identify your elected officials so that appointments can be made for you. If you have never visited your elected officials, do not worry. Deborah is our political junkie and knows all the ins and outs of Washington, DC. She can tutor you on the protocol for visiting Capitol Hill and you will be a pro by the time you get done with the visits. We will take some time on Wednesday to debrief from the visits and to discuss what we can do better next time.

Besides getting a chance to meet with your elected officials in Washington, DC, we will also be electing officers for WCOE. If you are interested in becoming an officer or a regional representative, or if you know someone who would make a good officer or regional representative, please notify Karen Huskey. We are also looking for some committee chairs for the standing committees. If you are interested in one of those, please give me a call (425-965-2434) or send me an email at idabrooker@wcoeusa.org.

See you in Washington DC in March

Keeping Good Employees

There are few things that can ruin a business owner's day quicker than having a valuable employee announce that he or she is leaving.

What often happens after this announcement is a mad scramble to put together some sort of deal to convince the employee to stay. Usually this tactic succeeds, but only because the employee is flattered by all of the sudden attention and because the employer has simply thrown money at the problem. Unfortunately, it is probably just a matter of time before the employee moves on to greener pastures.

The effort to retain employees must start when they are hired, not when they threaten to leave. Surprisingly, money is not necessarily the most important factor. When trying to attract, motivate, or keep an important employee, it is the bigger picture that often counts. Business owners need to recognize what the employee wants from the job and figure out what must be done to help that employee meet his or her objectives.

While almost everyone would like more money, once employees feel relatively secure, their needs shift from wants to enhanced self-esteem and self actualization. In other words, while money is always important, showing employees their value and potential can be more important in keeping good people.

Many employee attitude surveys show that money is not the most important factor in job satisfaction. Other issues, such as a boss who listens, recognition for good work, being informed of what's going on in the business, opportunities for career advancement, and chances to broaden skills become more important to many employees than monetary compensation.

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SBA Launches New Online Tool for Women

www.sba.gov/women

The U.S. Small Business Administration has launched a new website, MY Biz for Women, to provide information and assistance to women entrepreneurs. MY BIZ for Women was designed to focus on providing a one-stop access point for women to gain knowledge on programs, news and ideas. The site is a great place to gain information on starting and growing a small business, gaining access to capital and contract opportunities and links to other government agencies and SBA resources.

Women owned business are rapidly growing in the United States and the SBA is committed helping to break down economic development barriers. The main features of the website are up-to-date information on the issues of women in business, women's business data & research, inspiring success stories, business tips, and upcoming events.

By going to <http://www.sba.gov/news/calendar.html> you can click on the state you reside in and get a monthly schedule of all the events in your area. The site also allows you to find national and business match making events in your area.

Another feature of the website to check out is the monthly column guest who will share their wisdom and perspectives while providing valuable insight into the world of entrepreneurship. Also, by visiting the website <http://web.sba.gov/list/> you can subscribe to the monthly SBA Solutions Newsletter, as well as, additional newsletters ranging from states news to current issues facing women business owners.

Travel Safety Tips

By Dorothy Erickson

As you plan your vacation or one of the many business trips you take, start preparing for your personal safety while you pack your suitcase.

As soon as you get to your room in the hotel, take the time to locate stairways and fire escapes, and determine two emergency escape routes. (Most hotels post escape maps on the inside of the door to your room.) Count the number of doors between your room and emergency exits. Make certain the door to your room is always tightly closed, and that the safety lock is used when you are in your room. Don't open the door to anyone who does not properly identify themselves. If you aren't certain the person has a legitimate reason to enter your room, call the front desk for confirmation.

If you suspect someone on an elevator may intend to follow you or accost you, get off at a floor other than your own or return to the lobby. Every elevator is equipped with an emergency alarm button – use it if the elevator becomes stuck between floors or if you are accosted while on the elevator.

Regarding your valuables – If you don't really need it, leave it at home and make sure to guard the ones you do bring. Use traveler's checks and major credit cards. Carry only as much cash as you absolutely need, in small denominations. Use the hotel security box or safe. Do not leave valuables such as cash, checks, credit cards or car keys in your hotel room. Do not openly discuss or display large amounts of money.

When you leave your hotel, don't advertise the fact that you are a visitor to the area. If you are attending a convention, don't

wear your convention badge outside the hotel. Get specific directions prior to leaving the hotel about how to get to your next destination. When you are on the street, if you are not sure where to find the area you want to visit, go to an open business and get directions instead of asking someone on the street. Be wary of pan-handlers or strangers who seem overly eager to help you, particularly at popular tourist attractions.

Always keep an eye on your purse, briefcase and luggage. Don't leave them unattended. Carry your purse close to your body. When in an airport, rent a luggage cart to carry your belongings – it is simpler to keep track of them and easier on your back.

If you are driving, use valet services when ever possible. If you do park the car yourself, park in a well-lighted spot as close as possible to the entrance and have someone accompany you to and from your car, especially at night. Check around the car and look in the back seat before getting in. Look underneath the car as you approach it to ensure no one is hiding under it. Don't hide a spare key on the car. If you are parked next to a van with a sliding side door, don't enter your vehicle from that side. If another car bumps you from behind and you have any reason to suspect it was deliberate, especially if you are in an unfamiliar or questionable neighborhood and/or alone, don't get out of the car, keep driving. If you are being followed, go to a 24 hour business establishment and drive as close to the front door as possible, even on the sidewalk if necessary, and have someone there call the police for you.

Remember be alert at all times.

Union Membership % Drops Again

As reported by the Public Service Research Foundation, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics released its annual report on union membership on January 20. (www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm)

The percentage of American workers who belong to a union remained constant in 2005 at 12.5 percent. For workers in the private sector, the percentage dropped slightly from 7.9 in 2004 to 7.8 in 2005. Union membership among government workers increased slightly from 36.4 to 36.5 percent due to an increase of 163,000 union members on taxpayer-funded payrolls.

One of the biggest drops in union density came in the construction industry, in which the percentage of union workers fell from 14.7 in 2004 to 13.1 percent in 2005. The number of union members in construction fell by 53,000 despite an increase in construction employment of more than 500,000.

16th Annual OSDBU Procurement Conference April 19-20, 2006

The Federal government Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization are sponsoring the annual event, originally established in 1990 as the Procurement Opportunities Conference & Exposition. The purpose of the conference is to provide networking and educational opportunities to all conference participants. For 15 years OSDBU Offices have been successful in bringing small businesses, large corporations and government agencies together in one place.

In addition to networking opportunities on the Exhibit Floor, there will be four seminars, Procurement Matchmaking with program managers and procurement representatives, and on-site procurement opportunity offers.

Large businesses with government contracts and federal government agencies are continually seeking small, minority, 8(a), SDB, service-disabled veteran-owned, veteran-owned and women-owned businesses. This OSDBU Procurement Conference offers the opportunity for you to connect with quality vendors and subcontractors who can help you with their contracting needs and requirements.

The cost to attend the OSDBU 2006 Conference is \$100 for industry attendees registering before 4/1/2006 and \$175 for industry attendees registering on or after 4/1/2006. To register visit www.fbcinc.com/osdbu/registration.asp and either submit an online application or print the manual application and fax to (301) 206-2950.

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Keeping Good Employees

(continued)

So, what can you do to keep good employees?

First, don't assume anything. Too many managers assume they know what makes people tick. At the start of the hiring process, find out what new employees want from their jobs and how they want to grow. Help them structure a career path.

Second, the management team should properly evaluate the performance of all employees and set goals and objectives for the performance of key people. Too many employees leave because they feel they never get proper recognition for what they've accomplished.

Third, managers must constantly communicate to their people the results of their efforts or, in other words, what's going on in the business.

Finally, don't overlook money completely. While money is not the only factor in job satisfaction, it is a factor that needs attention. Think not only in terms of salary, but also in terms of total compensation: base pay, incentives, and benefits. Every job is worth a certain amount of money in a certain marketplace. All employers have to determine the value of a job and develop a philosophy of what they want to pay in their market. Then the business owner(s) must decide what total compensation program will fit all of the employees' needs and the company's budget.

So, how do you retain first-rate employees?

1. Determine their basic wants.
2. Evaluate performance to recognize accomplishments.
3. Inform employees of what is going on in the company, and how their efforts have added to its success.
4. Develop a total compensation plan that is based on the demands of the market and the employees' value to you.

(Ron Magnus – FMI Leadership eNews Newsletter January 2006)

WCOE USA Annual Meeting
March 19-22, 2006
Annual Meeting Tentative Schedule of Events

Sunday March 19, 2006

- 10:00-1:30 WCOE Board of Director Meeting
2:00-4:00 General Membership Meeting
Position Paper Review
Election of Officers
4:00-5:00 "Hot Topics on the Hills" Ann Sullivan- lobbyist for WIPP
5:00-6:00 Welcome Reception
Optional Activity- Ford's Theatre- American classic musical *Shenandoah* \$30.00
(only 8 tickets available so sign up now)

Monday, March 20, 2006

- 8:00-9:00 Breakfast- Invited Speaker
Senator Olympia Snowe- Chairwoman of the Senate Small Business Committee
10:00-12:00 SBA Briefing on business opportunities with the federal government
1:00 – 2:30 Briefing with Homeland Security Agency relating to construction opportunities.
3:00-5:00 "Branding: Standout from the Crowd"
Optional Tour- Monuments by Moonlight \$30.00

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

- 8:00 Breakfast- Briefing for Day on the Hill
9:00-12:00 Appointments on Capitol Hill
12:00-2:00 Lunch at the Capitol Hill Club
2:00-5:00 Appointment on Capitol Hill
5:00-6:00 Reception at Willard Hotel- Installation of Officers
Optional Dinner- Marrakesh - Moroccan Restaurant- \$50 per person
(wine and drinks additional)

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

- 9:00-10:30 Briefing with Department of Defense, Army, Navy and Air Force Procurement Panel
11:00-1:00 WCOE Board of Directors Meeting

Willard InterContinental Washington Hotel Information

Address: 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20004

Phone Number: 1-800-827-1747

Room Rate: \$269 per night (plus tax)

Note: The room rate is on a first come first serve basis until February 17, 2006. After that date, rooms can be reserved based on availability and the price may increase.

WCOE Annual Meeting

Presented by Women Construction Owners & Executives, USA
March 19-22, 2005 - Washington, D.C.

REGISTRATION

Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Registration Fees:

Early Bird Registration-made and paid on or before February 17, 2006

WCOE members and affiliated partners:	\$390
Non members	\$440

Registration after February 17, 2006 (credit card payment only)

WCOE members and affiliated partners:	\$465
Non members	\$505
All "at the door" registrations	\$555

Optional Activities:

March 19 Ford's Theatre- Shenandoah	\$30	# of tickets: _____
March 20 Monuments by Moonlight	\$30	# of tickets: _____
March 21 Marakesh Restaurant	\$50	# of tickets: _____

Total amount _____

Will you be staying through March 22? Y N (If not, what is your departure date? _____)

Name: _____

Billing address if different from above: _____

Credit card number: _____ Exp Date: _____

Master Card Visa American Express

Signature Authroization: _____

If you are an affiliated partner and are claiming the lower registration fee, please circle your affiliation:

NAMC NAWBO NAWIC WIPP