

## New Reports Demonstrate Progress in Best Practices, Policy Development for Women's Entrepreneurship

The historic growth of women-owned businesses in the United States has generated increased demand for the creation of innovative programs and policies to foster their growth. Today, for the first time, two new reports from the National Women's Business Council document this progress by examining current best practices in support of women's entrepreneurship and by recording the history of policies that have resulted in today's unprecedented 10.6 million U.S. businesses in which women are equal or majority owners.

"We are extremely pleased to announce the publication of these two reports, which have both documented and addressed some very timely and important questions about how to further the growth of women's entrepreneurship," said Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies and Chair of the National Women's Business Council. "It is our hope that these reports will not only provide women business owners with comprehensive information about policies and programs for women's enterprise development, but that this information will be used to enlighten and inform future policy and programmatic action in the United States and in other countries."

The first report, "Best Practices in Supporting Women's Entrepreneurship: A Compendium of Public and Private Sector Organizations and Initiatives," profiles 24 selected organizations or initiatives that provide outstanding support for women-owned businesses and that have widespread impact throughout the United States. The report answers such questions as:

- Who helps women-owned businesses as they start up or as they become more established and seasoned?

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## NWBC and ICSB Announce Best Paper Award

In the fall of 2003, the National Women's Business Council and the International Council for Small Business ([www.icsb.org](http://www.icsb.org)) announced that they would work together to jointly promote a best paper award for analysis focused on women's entrepreneurship. The ICSB is an organization comprised of academic researchers and "practitioners" focused on small business issues.

The NWBC is pleased to report that the winner of the inaugural award for this paper was recently announced at the ICSB's recent conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. The paper is entitled "Strategic Capabilities of Ghanaian Female Business Owners and the Performance of Their Ventures" and is co-authored by Dr. Kojo Saffu of Brock University in Ontario, Canada and Dr. Takyiwa Manu of the University of Ghana.

The complete paper may be viewed at the Council's web site, at <http://www.nwbc.gov/ICSB-Best-Paper-2004.pdf>

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## NWBC Members Speak Up for Women's Entrepreneurship on the International Stage

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Policy and programmatic support for women's enterprise development was a key focus at two recent conferences, held concurrently in Istanbul, Turkey. On June 3-5, 2004, representatives from over 75 countries gathered for a meeting of small and medium enterprise (SME) ministers hosted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a multi-national economic policy body headquartered in Paris. The United States is one of 30 member countries of the OECD. These nations were joined by representatives from a number of observer countries (from Albania to Vietnam), other international economic policy organizations (such as the African Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, and the World Trade Organization), and non-governmental organizations (including the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the International Council of Small Business, and the Latin American Venture Capital Association). These delegates discussed a wide variety of issues - ranging from Entrepreneurship and SME Innovation and Enhancing the Role of SMEs in Development to a unique workshop on SME statistics.



Council Members (from left to right): **Dr. Marsha Firestone**, President, Women Presidents' Organization; **Terry Neese**, President & Co-Founder, Women Impacting Public Policy; NWBC Executive Director **Julie Weeks**; and NWBC Chair **Marilyn Carlson Nelson**, Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies, Inc. (Photo: Amy Ryan, U.S. Department of Commerce)

Women's entrepreneurship was a special focus for the first time at the ministerial level within the OECD. Women's enterprise development policies and programs were also discussed in much greater detail at a second forum, "Accelerating Women's Entrepreneurship," held from June 5-7, and organized by Project Tsunami, a U.S.-based global accelerator for women's entrepreneurship. This gathering attracted several hundred participants from 25 countries, including those attending the OECD Ministerial event. A background report, "Women's Entrepreneurship: Issues and Policies," was prepared in advance of the conference by the OECD and is available at:

<http://www.oelis.oecd.org/olis/2003doc.nsf/0/265244bd14baf33c1256e9e002eb940?OpenDocument>.

Several members of the National Women's Business Council played important roles at these events. Council Chair **Marilyn Carlson Nelson**, Council members **Susan Phillips Bari**, **Marsha Firestone** and **Terry Neese**, and Council Executive Director **Julie Weeks** were on the official U.S. delegation to the OECD meeting. The U.S. delegation was led by SBA Deputy Administrator **Melanie Sabelhaus**.

Nelson spoke at a private-sector business symposium held the day before the OECD Ministerial, and reported on the event during a plenary session panel at the Ministerial. She also addressed the Accelerating Women's Entrepreneurship Forum. Council members Bari, Firestone, and Neese participated on a "U.S. Best Practices" panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Weeks. The Council members had several other speaking roles at the conference as well, participating in discussions on research, data and statistics, entrepreneurial training, access to corporate markets, and advocacy. Weeks participated in the closing plenary session, focused on planning next steps beyond the conference, and she observed that the next phase of women's enterprise development needs to move past sharing lessons learned and best practices to more active collaboration and engaging in advocacy and policy action.

## Ann Marie Almeida Appointed to the NWBC

Ann Marie Almeida, President and CEO of the Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC), has been appointed to a three-year term on the National Women's Business Council as the representative of the AWBC.



The Association of Women's Business Centers' vision is a world where economic justice, wealth and well-being are realized through the collective leadership and power of entrepreneurial women by developing and strengthening a global network of women's business centers to advance the growth and success of women business owners. As President and CEO of the AWBC, Ann Marie Almeida directs training, mentoring, funding and research programs that foster prosperity, encourage entrepreneurship, support economic access and empower leadership among women entrepreneurs.

Previously, Almeida served as the Director of Programs and Development for the Camden Public Library in Camden, Maine.

"I am honored and extremely pleased to serve on the National Women's Business Council and join an amazing and dedicated group of entrepreneurial women," said Almeida. "One of my goals as a member of the Council is to make sure we keep an inclusive and long term vision on public policy matters that support the economically diverse and vibrant marketplace that women business owners represent."

### Upcoming NWBC Research

- Launching Women-Owned Firms: A Longitudinal Study of Women's Business Centers (conducted by the Center for Women's Business Research with partial sponsorship from the NWBC), July 2004
- Trends in Minority-Owned Women Employer Establishments (based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau), August 2004
- Factors of Success for the Women's Business Center Program, September 2004

To learn more about these projects and previous NWBC research, visit our web site at

[www.nwbc.gov/research/research.html](http://www.nwbc.gov/research/research.html)

## Council Members

### Chair

**Marilyn Carlson Nelson**, Chairman and CEO  
Carlson Companies, Inc.

**Jean Johnson**, President and CEO  
LegalWATCH

**Laurie McDonald Jonsson**, President and CEO  
Stellar International

**Karen Kerrigan**, President and CEO  
Women Entrepreneurs, Inc.

**Claudia Laird**, Vice President, Ability Center,  
and an owner of LIDCO, Inc.

**Sheri Orlowitz**, Founder, Chairman and CEO,  
Shan Industries, LLC; Founder and Owner,  
OrloVon, LLC

**Annie Presley**, Principal and Owner  
The McKellar Group, Inc.

**Susan Wilson Solovic**, CEO  
SBTV.com

### Women's Business Organizations

**Ann Marie Almeida**, President  
Association of Women's Business Centers

**Mary MacRae**, Immediate Past President  
National Association of Women Business Owners

**Maria Taxman**, Board Member  
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

**Terry Neese**, President & Co-Founder  
Women Impacting Public Policy

**Dr. Marsha Firestone**, President  
Women Presidents' Organization

**Susan Bari**  
Women's Business Enterprise National Council

## Why Export?

By Heather Tomasetti, Global Diversity Initiative,  
U.S. Department of Commerce

Going global, generally considered the domain of large corporations, offers great potential for businesses of all sizes and types, especially women-owned businesses. The last decade has seen significant growth for women-owned business. Between 1997 and 2004, the number of women- and equally-owned firms grew by 17%, compared to 9% among all privately-held firms. The number of women-owned firms with \$1 million or more in revenues grew by 32% between 1997 and 2000 - nearly twice the rate of all comparably sized firms. At the same time, the U.S. government has aggressively pursued trade liberalization to open the doors to new markets for U.S. business. With the growth of women-owned business and new opportunities opening up world wide, now is an opportune time for women business owners to consider taking their business international. Here are some reasons you should consider exporting:

- **Increase Sales and Profits:** If your firm is succeeding domestically, expanding overseas will likely improve overall profitability as well. Of the total global market, 95 percent is located outside of the U.S. Furthermore, workers in jobs supported by goods exports receive wages 13 to 20 percent higher than the national average. U.S. services exports more than doubled since 1989, rising from \$117 billion to over \$279 billion in 2002. Additionally, export markets provide an additional source of revenue during domestic economic downturns.
  - **Enhance Competitiveness:** Establishing your company overseas will provide a new global perspective and can facilitate improvements with existing and new products. Exporting can help you compete more effectively against foreign competitors here in the U.S and can help you win and retain global clients.
  - **Long-Term Security:** The U.S. is a large market with a wealth of opportunity, but it is also a mature market with intense competition from domestic, and increasingly, foreign competitors. We are approaching the day when we will be doing business in a sin-
- (continued on pg. 5)

## NWBC in the News

The following are just a few highlights from recent NWBC media coverage:

- **Entrepreneur Magazine, Joining Forces,** May 25, 2004
- **The Orange County Register, Small Business Contributions Lauded,** May 17, 2004
- **San Jose Mercury News, Federal SBA Loans Facing Cuts,** May 6, 2004

### Women's Business Connection... a monthly business issues conference call brought to you by the National Women's Business Council

**July Date:** Tuesday, July 27, 2004, 3:00 - 4:00 PM EDT

**July Topic:** The ABC's of Certification for Women's Business Enterprises. Council Member **Susan Bari**, President of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council, will moderate a discussion on the impact of certification with women entrepreneurs and corporate purchasing executives.

**August Date:** Tuesday, August 24, 2004, 3:00-4:00 PM EDT

**August Topic:** An update on the status of current government efforts to "unbundle" Federal contracts for women-owned businesses seeking to participate in the Federal procurement marketplace. The call will be moderated by Council member **Terry Neese**, co-founder of Women Impacting Public Policy.

**How To Join:** Call 1-877-326-2337, enter code 3687613#

For more information about this call, please contact Aileen M. Kishaba, Director of Policy Programs at (202) 205-6829 or by e-mail at [aileen.kishaba@sba.gov](mailto:aileen.kishaba@sba.gov).

**Women's Business Connection is scheduled for  
the fourth Tuesday of each month;  
we encourage you to mark your calendars  
and join us regularly!**

## Why Export, cont.

gle global market instead of foreign and domestic markets separately. Exporting firms are 9 percent less likely to shut down than comparable non-exporting plants.

- **Small Companies Can Be Successful Exporters:** It is a popular misconception that only large companies can succeed overseas. From 1992 to 2001, the total number of U.S. small and medium-sized firms that exported goods increased 105 percent, from 112,854 firms to 231,420 firms. Many small companies have found that their competitive advantage lies in some unique or niche products that are in demand overseas.
- **A Level Playing Field:** Furthermore, trade liberalization, including the recent Free Trade Agreements, has helped to remove trade barriers and open new markets for U.S. exporters.

The U.S. government provides extensive service to assist U.S. companies that wish to export. The U.S. Commercial Service's Global Diversity Initiative (GDI) is embarking on an outreach campaign to increase awareness among women's business enterprises of the benefits of trade, of trade opportunities, and various trade assistance programs. For more information about this campaign, please contact the Global Diversity Initiative at 202-482-4792 or [www.buyusa.gov/globaldiversity](http://www.buyusa.gov/globaldiversity). For more information on U.S. government programs, please visit [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov).

## Featured Organizations of the Month: The U.S. Department of Commerce's Export.gov and the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Women's Issues

This month we highlight two organizations that have made significant contributions toward increasing political and economic opportunities for women worldwide.

The U.S. Department of Commerce's [Export.gov](http://www.export.gov) is the portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government. Whether you're looking for trade leads, free export counseling, or help with the export process, [Export.gov](http://www.export.gov) is the first step in growing your international sales. Learn more by visiting [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov) and learn more about the Department of Commerce by visiting [www.doc.gov](http://www.doc.gov) or by calling 1-800-USA-TRADE.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of International Women's Issues provides current and comprehensive information about women's political and economic participation in the U.S. and throughout the world. Visit their web site at <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/> to learn more about their work and to access previous issues of their International Women's Issues Newsletter. To automatically receive full texts of selected U.S. Department of State speeches, documents and publications that provide a wealth of information on U.S. foreign policy via e-mail, sign up for the Department of State's listserve at <http://www.state.gov/www/listservs/cms.html>.

## Quote of the Month

"The worldwide advancement of women's issues is not only in keeping with the deeply held values of the American people; it is strongly in our national interest as well. In today's world, any American Secretary of State, male or female, must pay attention to the issues affecting the rights and well being of women -- over half the world's population. Women's issues affect not only women; they have profound implications for all humankind. Women's issues are human rights issues... We, as a world community, can not even begin to tackle the array of problems and challenges confronting us without the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of life."

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell



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## New Reports Demonstrate Progress in Best Practices, cont.

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- What associations can women entrepreneurs join to network and to grow their businesses?
- How can women-owned businesses obtain access to mentoring, education, capital, and markets to take their businesses to the next level?
- And what types of support are available from which kinds of organizations?

The report contains a functional matrix that shows at a glance how the profiled organizations compare with each other in terms of the kind of support and assistance they offer to women entrepreneurs. It also contains short descriptions of 10 additional organizations or initiatives that did not fully meet the inclusion criteria for profiles but nevertheless offer important support to women-owned businesses. While the NWBC noted that it is extremely pleased to have been able to identify so many organizations that share a strong focus on and commitment to women's entrepreneurship, the report also includes several recommendations, including:

- Society must increase its recognition of the fact that maximizing opportunity and advancement for women is a business issue, just as fundamental as productivity, quality, or product development;
- Well-supported, timely, accurate, and reliable research is a driving force behind the expansion of public and private sector programs that advance women's entrepreneurship;
- Sustainable support for women's business development can best be achieved if there is active involvement not only from women business owners and their organizations but also from government and non-government organizations supporting enterprise development;
- Strong partnerships across organizations, working towards the same goal, will strengthen each group's efforts and avoid duplication; and
- As the impetus for action and implementation of programs for women entrepreneurs has historically come from the women business owner community, it is very important for women entrepreneurs to continue to have a voice in public policy matters because having an official voice in government is important for advancing policy.

"Policy and Progress: Supporting the Growth of Women's Business Enterprise" is the second report recently published by the NWBC. The report documents the legal and policy changes that have had an impact on the growth of women's

business enterprises over the past several decades and serves to benchmark the progress that has been made from a policy standpoint, including key programs, legislation and necessary precursors to entry. The report addresses such questions as:

- What impact have changing Federal policies and programs had on women's business enterprises?
- What has been the impact of broad societal changes on women's business ownership?
- What impact has the growing contribution of women's businesses to the economy as a whole had on Federal policies and programs?
- What policy barriers still remain, and what should the policy focus of the NWBC and women's business organizations be in the 21st Century?

This report also includes policy recommendations for direction in areas that still need to be addressed by the Federal government and private sector, such as:

- Ensuring that the tools women entrepreneurs need are available and accessible from government, private sector and public-private partnerships;
- Providing increased visibility not only to comparative research on women's entrepreneurship, but also highlighting individual women business owners of achievement;
- Sharing best practices across borders (something already under way through such vehicles as the OECD and other international women's conferences and trade missions); and
- Continuing the development of gender disaggregated business data and analysis, especially concerning the impact of government programs on women-owned businesses.

Both reports, "Best Practices in Supporting Women's Entrepreneurship in the United States" and "Policy and Progress: Supporting the Growth of Women's Business Enterprise" may be obtained at the Council's web site, [www.nwbc.gov](http://www.nwbc.gov).

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## Upcoming Events in the International Women's Business Community

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### **The 11th Global Conference of Women Entrepreneurs**

September 16 - 19, 2004

Beijing, China

<http://www.cwe.org.cn/english/index.asp>

### **Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's Gender Focal Point Network Meeting**

September 26 - 27, 2004

Santiago, Chile

[http://apps.apec.org/apec/events\\_calendar/events\\_calendar.php](http://apps.apec.org/apec/events_calendar/events_calendar.php)

### **FCEM's 52nd International Congress (FCEM is a worldwide association of women entrepreneurs)**

October 10 - 14, 2004

Glasgow, Scotland

<http://www.bawescotland.org.uk/GTConnect/HttpAcceptor/?redirect=true>

### **The International Alliance for Women's "Uncommon Women on Common Ground" Conference**

November 4 - 5, 2004

Washington, DC

<http://www.tiaw.org/schedule.asp>

### **The Prowess Second International Conference**

November 10 - 11, 2004

Nottingham, England

<http://www.prowess.org.uk/conference/index2004.html>

### **Project Finance Forum for Africa's African Women Entrepreneurship Conference, "Empower A Woman, Feed A Nation"**

November 21 - 23, 2004

Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.pffa.biz/vcforum.shtml>

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## Council Mission

The National Women's Business Council is a bi-partisan Federal advisory council created to serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners.

The Council's mission is to promote bold initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women's business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces, from start-up to success to significance.