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Minority Supplier News

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CONFERENCE EDITION

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SUPPLIER DIVERSITY LEADERS AMONG NMSDC CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Jill Bossi



David Hernandez



Bill Imada



Christine Krathwohl



Jacqueline Pata



Quentin Roach



Ric Schneider



David Segura



David L. Steward



Shelley Stewart, Jr.



Clifton Taulbert



Keith Wandell

Corporate and minority business chief executive officers, chief procurement officers and supplier diversity professionals are among the featured speakers headlining the 2012 NMSDC Conference and Business Opportunity Fair in Denver, Colorado. Nearly 7,000 supplier diversity professionals, procurement executives, and Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American business owners are expected to attend. The theme of the Conference is “Minority Businesses and Corporate America: Advancing Minority Suppliers in the Global Supply Chain.”

“Our roster of speakers represents top corporate executives, supplier diversity professionals, and minority business owners and advocates,” said NMSDC President Joset B. Wright. “We are pleased to have them join us to offer their insights on minority supplier development as part of our collective efforts to help strengthen minority businesses to succeed in the global marketplace.”

The conference program opens Monday, October 29, with a Power Breakfast featuring **Bill Imada**, founder, chairman and chief collaboration officer of the IW

Group. Mr. Imada, has more than 20 years of experience in marketing, public relations, advertising and training. He and his company represent some of the top global and domestic brands.

The one-day Business Opportunity Fair—the ideal venue for deal-making—follows the Power Breakfast. It will be open for a morning session, close for lunch and reopen for an afternoon session. The featured speakers for the interview-style luncheon are **David H. Segura**, founder and chief executive officer of the IT management firm VisionIT, and his mentor **David Steward**, co-founder and chairman of World Wide Technology Inc., a market-leading systems integrator and supply chain solutions provider.

The conference program resumes Tuesday with a Networking Continental Breakfast, where attendees can make new business connections and build on established relationships. A plenary session titled *Real World Supply Chain Management* follows. **Jill Bossi**, vice president and chief procurement officer of supply chain and real estate management at The American Red Cross will moderate a panel featuring **Christine Krathwohl**, executive direc-

NMSDC ADDS 11 NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

The National Minority Supplier Development Council welcomed 11 new national corporate members during the third quarter of 2012, bringing the total number of new members thus far to 36. They are:

[Arizona Public Service Company](#)

(Phoenix, Arizona), a subsidiary of Pinnacle West Capital, distributes power to more than 1.1 million customers in 11 Arizona counties, making it the largest electric utility in the state. It operates about 6,000 miles of transmission lines and generates 6,280 MW of capacity at mainly fossil-fueled and nuclear power plants. Annual sales are \$3.15 billion.

[Continental Automotive Systems](#)

(Auburn Hills, Michigan), a division of Continental AG (Germany), is a leading brake and electronics supplier to the automotive industry, delivering systems, components, electronics, lithium-ion batteries and engineering services. It comprises two units, Continental Teves and Continental Temic. CAS consists of 44 plants, research centers and test tracks in 15 countries. Annual sales are \$6 billion.

[Corizon Health, Inc.](#) (Brentwood, Tennessee) provides medical care and pharmacy services to about 345,000 inmates in more than 400 state prisons, municipal jails and other correctional facilities in 29 states. Annual sales are \$1.3 billion.

[Diageo North America, Inc.](#) (Norwalk, Connecticut), a subsidiary of Diageo plc

(England), is a leader in the premium drinks business, including: Captain Morgan rum, Crown Royal Canadian whiskey, Johnnie Walker Scotch whiskey, Smirnoff vodka, José Cuervo tequila, Tanqueray gin, Sterling Vineyards wines and beer under the Guinness and Red Stripe labels. Annual sales are more than \$1 billion.

[Huntington National Bank](#) (Cleveland, Ohio) provides full-service commercial, small business and consumer banking services; mortgage services; treasury management and foreign exchange services; equipment leasing; wealth and investment management services; trust services; brokerage services; customized insurance brokerage and service programs; and other financial products and services. Annual sales are \$2.9 billion.

[Leggett & Platt Incorporated](#) (Carthage, Missouri) makes residential furnishings (such as innersprings and bed frames) and commercial fixtures (store displays, shelves, furniture components). It also produces industrial materials (wire, steel tubing) and specialized items (automotive seating, docking stations for electronic devices). L&P operates 130 manufacturing facilities in nearly 20 countries. Annual sales are \$3.64 billion.

[MacLean-Fogg Company](#) (Mundelein, Illinois) is a diversified manufacturing company providing engineered fasteners, transmission components and suspension devices to auto, truck and equipment producers worldwide, as well as automatic connectors, composite insulators, distribu-

tion and transmission hardware and unique electrical products. Annual sales are \$800 million.

[Phillips 66](#) (Houston, Texas) Formed to hold the downstream (refining and marketing) business of ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66, the world's top independent refiner, has a global processing capacity of more than 2.2 million barrels per day. It sells petroleum at 8,300 retail outlets in the United States under the 76, Conoco, JET and Phillips 66 brands, and at 1,700 owned gas stations in Europe. Annual sales are more than \$30 billion.

[Sunbelt Rentals, Inc.](#) (Fort Mill, South Carolina) specializes in the rental and retail sale of industrial machinery, construction equipment, vehicles, pumps, aerial platforms, power generators, portable air conditioners, scaffolding, traffic safety products, compressed air equipment and tools. Annual sales are \$1.5 billion.

[United States Cellular Corporation](#)

(Chicago, Illinois) provides wireless phone service to about 6 million customers in the United States, largely in the Midwest and the South. Annual sales are more than \$4 billion.

[Vanguard Health Systems, Inc.](#)

(Nashville, Tennessee) operates 26 acute care hospitals located in Arizona, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan and Texas. It also runs three managed health care plans. Annual sales are \$4.9 billion.

4 MBEs EARN CORPORATE PLUS® DESIGNATION

[Corporate Plus®](#) welcomed four new members in 2012. The addition of these companies raises to 94 the total number of Corporate Plus® members. The new members are:

Amish Shah is president and CEO of [Kem Krest Corporation](#), a managed service provider that offers total program management through supply chain fulfillment and Aftersale solutions. Kem Krest is headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana.

David Burnley Sr. is president of [Devon Facility Management L.L.C.](#), a man-

ager and industrial janitorial supplier based in Detroit, Michigan. The company has LEED-certified engineers and is certified by ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association.

Sanjay Govil is chairman of [Infinite Computer Solutions, Inc.](#), a provider of IT-related solutions, software development, infrastructure and maintenance. The company has ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 certifications. ICS has more than 4,000 employees worldwide. Its U.S. headquarters is in Rockville, Maryland, with development centers and other operations across the country. Infinite Computer Solutions has

international operations in China, India, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

Livia I. Whisenhunt is president and CEO of [PS Energy Group, Inc.](#), which provides fuel supply and inventory management, alternative fuels, onsite fueling, emergency fueling services and retail cards. The company's wireless services include GPS, telematics and tank monitoring, and Smart Grid/Meter advisory services. PS Energy Group is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.

The National Minority Supplier Development Council selected 16 outstanding minority-owned businesses as 2012 Regional Suppliers of the Year. The winners were selected from a group of 78 nominees and evaluated on the basis of business growth, development and performance, community service and the ability to overcome challenges brought on by the company owner's heritage or background. One regional winner from each class will be named a National Winner at the Conference Awards Banquet held on Wednesday, October 31, in Denver, Colorado. Meet this year's Regional Suppliers of the Year:

**CLASS IV
SALES GREATER
THAN \$50 MILLION**



David W. Barfield

The Bartech Group, Inc., Livonia, Michigan – David W. Barfield is the chief executive officer of The Bartech Group, an integrated professional services firm that specializes in workforce management solutions, staff augmentation business process outsourcing and consulting. The Black-owned firm is an NMSDC-certified minority-controlled company that is responsible for more than 25,000 consultants and \$2 billion in managed services expenditures. It spent \$600 million with other minority business enterprises. The Bartech Group's client roster includes AT&T, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Chrysler, Cummins, DTE Energy, Dell, Eaton, Ford, General Motors, Glaxo-SmithKline, Verizon and Volkswagen. A second-generation company, Bartech and its employees are involved with a number of organizations in the local Detroit community, including the American Heart Association, Detroit Historical Society, Dress for Success, Habitat for Humanity, Gleaners Food Bank, Michigan Veterans Foundation, the Share Products Program and Spaulding

for Children. The company supports the global community with its Barfield Clean Initiative by working with Cross International to fund the construction of wells that provide clean drinking water in Africa, Haiti and other developing countries.

www.bartechgroup.com



Sanjeev Tirath

Pyramid Consulting, Inc., Alpharetta, Georgia – Sanjeev Tirath is the chief executive officer of Pyramid Consulting, an information technology consulting services company that specializes in staff augmentation and lifecycle IT solutions, including application development and maintenance, legacy migration, outsourced product development, mobile development and maintenance, mobile test automation and quality assurance. The 16-year-old firm has nearly 1,900 employees operating out of its headquarters near Atlanta, five regional offices in Bellevue, Washington; Charlotte, North Carolina; Dallas, Texas; Richmond, Virginia and Somerset, New Jersey; and provides global services via offices in India and Europe. In 2011, the Asian-Indian American firm recorded \$139.2 million in sales and spent nearly \$5 million with other MBEs. Pyramid also provides mentoring and business matchmaking opportuni-

ties to MBEs. AT&T, Accenture, Delta, The Home Depot and United Parcel Service are among the company's major customers. As the company has grown, so has its commitment to the community. Pyramid and its employees actively support the American Heart Association, American Kidney Fund, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, Georgia Council on Economic Education, Hands on Atlanta, Raksha, Tech-Bridge, United Way and Vibha. Additionally, the IT firm offers an initiative called "Operation: Paycheck," aimed at creating job opportunities for U.S. military veterans. Mr. Tirath is also an active board member of the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council. www.pyramidci.com



David Segura

Vision Information Technologies, dba VisionIT, Detroit, Michigan – David Segura is the chief executive officer of VisionIT, a Hispanic-owned information technology and engineering staffing services firm. Established in 1997, the company has grown into one of the largest Hispanic-owned IT firms in the country. Vision-IT employs more than 400 individuals and had sales of \$239 million in 2011, doing business with major customers like Comerica Bank, Detroit Public Schools, Freddie Mac, Johnson & Johnson, Meritor,

Pfizer, Siemens and Toyota. A supporter of other minority-owned businesses, VisionIT spent \$30 million with MBEs last year. Mr. Segura and VisionIT employees actively participate in the Detroit community through mentorship, internships, scholarships and job opportunities. The firm is the founding sponsor of the BizTech Summer Camp, an 11-year-old initiative created with Wayne State University's School of Business Administration and the Detroit Public Schools. The camp is a 10-week educational program for high school students that focuses on technical, business and social skill development with an emphasis on technology. VisionIT is also one of the founding sponsors of the T-Lab, an accelerated learning center for students in K-12 that uses high-end computers and interactive learning and emphasizes leadership, math, language, science and technology.

www.visionit.com



David L. Steward

World Wide Technology, Inc., Maryland Heights, Missouri – David L. Steward is co-founder and chairman of World Wide Technology, a 22-year-old systems integrator that provides

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cost-effective technology and supply chain solutions to the commercial, government and telecom sectors. With major customers like AT&T, Boeing, Cisco, Hewlett-Packard, Kaiser Permanente, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Pacific Gas & Electric and Wells Fargo, the Black-owned company had \$2.7 billion in sales in 2011. A perennial fixture atop *Black Enterprise* magazine's *BE100* list of leading industrial/service enterprises and an advocate for minority business, the firm has more than 1,600 employees and spent \$47.7 million with other MBEs in 2011. The company has a development initiative for MBEs called the Corporate Development Program (CDP). It facilitates the creation of mutually-beneficial partnerships with other minority organizations and qualified/certified MBEs and women-owned business enterprises. The CDP provides mentoring and supplier development collaboration; assists participants to select and retain qualified minority talent; and offers financial planning assistance, strategic assessments, financial assistance and business development to participants. In the community, World Wide Technology supports several local and national organizations, including The American Cancer Society, the Harmon College of Business and Professional Studies at the University of Central Missouri, Inwood House, Junior Achievement, Komen Race for the Cure, NPower, The Ronald McDonald House Charities, St. Patrick Center and the United Way campaign. www.wwt.com

**CLASS III
SALES BETWEEN
\$10 MILLION AND
\$50 MILLION**



Hubert Fitts

Corporate Management, Inc. dba Corporate Services Management LP, Tucker, Georgia – Bert Fitts is chief executive officer of Corporate Services Management, a provider of janitorial maintenance and specialty services to educational institutions, construction sites, Fortune 500 companies and the hospitality industry. The Black-owned company was established in 1992 and saw revenues reach \$11.2 million in 2011. Its major clients include Bombardier, Delta Air Lines, Time Warner, Turner Broadcasting System and Volkswagen. CSM received Delta's Star Award for being an "outstanding supplier partner." CSM employs 522 individuals. Last year, the company spent more than \$600,000 with other MBEs. CSM employees deliver food to feed the hungry, and the company supports Habitat for Humanity.

www.csmamerica.com



Ken Rogers/Cora Williams

Ideal Electrical Supply Corporation, Washington, D.C. – Ken Rogers and Cora Wil-

liams, a husband and wife team, are executive vice president and president, respectively, of Ideal Electrical Supply Corporation. This Black-owned distributor of electrical products was established in 1991 and counts Baltimore Gas and Electric Power Company and several federal agencies among its clients. The firm has 27 employees and is an authorized distributor for 3M, General Electric, Hubbell and Motorola. In 2011, Ideal's sales surpassed \$21 million and the company spent more than \$250,000 with other MBEs. Ideal believes in giving back to the community. In 1994 the couple established the Ideal Company Scholarship Fund, which has awarded more than \$140,000 in scholarships to inner-city high school seniors. www.ideallectric.com



Maureen Gray

KBM Facility Solutions, San Diego, California – Maureen Gray is chief executive officer of KBM Facility Solutions, a Hispanic American-owned janitorial contractor with 309 employees. The firm was founded in 1981 and provides sustainable/green cleaning services. It is one of the first businesses in its industry to commit time and resources to developing and maintaining a sustainability report. In addition, KBM is committed to reducing the impact its business operations have on the environment through corporate recycling programs, installation of wa-

ter-reduction measures, investing in technology that has significantly reduced paper consumption and conversion of its vehicle fleet to hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles. KBM's major clients include AT&T, Boeing, Northrop Grumman and The Walt Disney Company. In 2011, the company reported sales of \$31.3 million. This year KBM spent more than \$4.1 million with other MBEs. The company has received numerous awards, including being named one of the fastest growing privately-held companies in San Diego.

www.kbmfs.com



James Cabrera

United Building Maintenance Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois – James Cabrera is chief executive officer of United Building Maintenance (UBM), a custodial, landscaping and electrical services firm established in 1979. UBM's core clients consist of Fortune 100 corporations, including Grainger, Commonwealth Edison, United Airlines and Walgreens. The Hispanic American-owned company posted revenues of \$47 million in 2011 and spent more than \$20 million with other MBEs. UBM has 1,600 employees and has been recognized by *Crain's Chicago Business* as one of the largest minority-owned firms in the Chicago area. It was also named a Chicago Business Leader of Color. Mr. Cabrera is committed to supporting community initia-

tives, including the Junior Achievement Foundation, the National Latino Education Institute and the Illinois Police Association. www.ubm-usa.com

**CLASS II
SALES BETWEEN
\$1 MILLION AND
\$10 MILLION**



George E. Albu

Albu & Associates, Inc., Winter Park, Florida – George Albu is founder and president of Albu & Associates, a Hispanic American-owned firm with four employees that specializes in general contracting, design/build services and construction management. The company, which was founded in 1994, posted sales of \$7.09 million in 2011 and spent nearly \$1 million with other MBEs. Among its major clients are Amway, Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase. Albu & Associates was named to the list of the Top 25 Minority Businesses in Orlando by the *Orlando Business Journal*. Mr. Albu is actively involved in his community, renovating two area museums pro bono for the Maitland Historical Society and raising money for A Gift for Teaching, an organization that provides school supplies to underprivileged students in Central Florida. www.albu.biz



Robert Wallace

BITHGROUP Technologies Inc., Baltimore, Maryland – Robert Wallace is founder, president and chief executive officer of BITHGROUP Technologies, an award-winning firm established in 1992 that provides management consulting, biometrics and IT services and products. The Black-owned business has 10 employees and counts Accenture, Avaya, the City of Baltimore and IBM among its clients. The firm posted annual sales of \$7 million in 2011 and spent \$3.5 million with other MBEs. BITH-GROUP is among the leading MBEs in the rapidly growing field of renewable energy, as well as the established field of energy management. The company contributes a percentage of its annual profits to STEM initiatives and human development programs. It has received several prestigious awards, including the Mayor’s Business Recognition Award and the Greater Baltimore Council Bridging the Gap Achievement Award. BITHGROUP was also recognized for its contributions to the Governor of Maryland’s Small Business Task Force. www.bithgroup.com



Dorothy and Joe Richburg

KCS, Maplewood, Minnesota – Dorothy Richburg is chief

executive officer and president of KCS, and her husband, Joe Richburg, is the executive vice president. The couple operates a full-service professional staffing, procurement and technology company with 239 employees. The Black-owned business was founded in 1987 and posted annual sales of \$8.9 million last year. Its direct spend with other MBEs was more than \$1.4 million. Under the direction of Ms. Richburg, KCS was recognized by the Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce as 2011’s Outstanding Business of the Year and by the Minnesota Minority Supplier Development Council as the 2011 IT Business of the Year. The company provides in-kind support to local organizations and made more than \$95,000 in charitable contributions last year. KCS is also committed to exposing students to the IT field with the overall goal of increasing the accessibility that historically-disenfranchised populations have to information technology. www.keystonecs.com



Maurice Brewster

RM Executive Transportation dba Mosaic Global Transportation, Redwood City, California – Maurice Brewster is president and chief executive officer of Mosaic Global Transportation, an international limousine business with 40 employees. The 10-year-old firm has grown from a one-car operation with offices in a garage into a multimillion-dollar enterprise with more than 300 vehicles

that can provide service in 440 cities worldwide. Mosaic recorded sales of \$3 million in 2011 and spent \$1.87 million with other MBEs. The firm counts AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Marriott and the San Francisco 49ers among its major clients. In addition to expanding Mosaic’s business services, Mr. Brewster is committed to building a better minority-owned business community by supporting other MBEs. The company also supports local and national nonprofits and was named a Make-A-Wish Hero for the last two years. Recently, the firm was awarded a Blue Ribbon Small Business Award by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for excellence in business, strategy, employee development, community service and customer service. www.mosaicglobaltransportation.com

**CLASS I
SALES LESS THAN
\$1 MILLION**



Lily Otieno

Infinity Business Solutions, Buena Park, California – Lily Otieno is the president of the company, which was established in 2006. The Black-owned performance management consulting firm has five employees and focuses on supplier development training, contract/operational readiness and serves as a liaison for diverse business enterprises. The company had annual sales of \$180,000 in 2011 and spent \$35,000 with other MBEs.

Infinity Business Solutions lists the Asian Business Association of Orange County, the Los Angeles World Airports, Metropolitan Water District, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, San Jose Water, Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company among its major customers. Infinity Business Solutions supports the community through volunteer work with a number of organizations, including the Asian Business Association of Orange County, the California Public Utilities Commission, the Southern California Minority Supplier Development Council, and the Women's Business Enterprise Council-West.

www.ibsconsultingservices.com



Kenneth Stewart

Integrated Security Consultants, Tampa, Florida – Kenneth Stewart is the president and chief executive officer of the four-year-old company. The Black-owned firm designs, sells and installs electronic security systems. The company has 13 employees, recorded \$700,000 in sales in 2011 and spent \$80,000 with other MBEs. Its major customers include ADT Security, Ambiance Property Management, BMW North America, Bartow Police Department, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Department of Veteran Affairs, the National Football League and Simplex Grinnell. Mr. Stewart is the pastor of the Tabernacle of Hope, which has an active food pantry and clothing distribution

program, as well as a computer lab that provides free computer classes and employment skills training. Through its “How to Bake Your Own Pie” program, Mr. Stewart helps the unemployed and unemployable find gainful employment. Several times a year, he gives computers to the program graduates.

www.iscsecurity.net



Stacey Wade

NIMBUS, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky – Stacey Wade is the president and chief executive officer of the company, which was established in 2002. The Black-owned creative services, marketing and communications agency has expertise in digital and traditional media, including brand identity development and implementation; content development, copywriting and editing; design and development of mobile apps; tradeshow booths and on-site displays; interactive Web design; and public relations and media placement recommendations. The company posted sales of \$307,000 in 2011 and spent \$96,000 with other MBEs. Greater Louisville Inc. – the Metro Chamber of Commerce, Houston-Johnson, Legner Energy Group, Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing North America and Universal Music Group are among the firm's major customers. NIMBUS volunteers the time, talents and creative resources of the company to support Greater Louisville Inc. – The Metro Chamber of Com-

merce, Louisville Legends/Louisville Sports Commission, Our Father's House and the Tri-State Minority Supplier Development Council. Additionally, the firm contracts its non-profit clients at a discounted rate. Mr. Wade provides his support and time to 100 Black Men of Louisville and the TSMSDC MBE Input Committee. The agency also supports the growth and development of its industry through membership in the Ad Federation of Louisville, as well as through mentoring and hosting job shadow days at NIMBUS for local students considering a career in the creative services sector.

www.hellonimbus.com



Beverly Bantom

Unique Expressions, Ferndale, Michigan – Beverly Bantom is the chief executive officer of Unique Expressions, a distributor of corporate branded products and services. Established in 1999, the Black-owned firm with seven employees had sales of \$998,000 in 2011 and spent nearly \$150,000 with other MBEs. The company lists DTE, Dakkota Integrated Systems, Heritage Vision Plans, Huron Valley Ambulance, Molina Healthcare, St. John Providence Health System and Trinity Health among its major customers. Unique Expressions offers its customers personalized Web stores that offer branded merchandise for employees to purchase—saving their

clients the cost of maintaining a sales area or staffing a company store. The firm also provides “Decorate on Demand” and “Print on Demand” services that result in cost savings because clients can keep smaller inventories and re-order products as needed. In support of the community, Unique Expressions developed a mentorship program for high school and college students to be actively involved in business. The participants have used the program to build skills suitable for the workplace and secure employment opportunities. www.uniquex.net

Conference Speakers

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tor, global logistics and supplier diversity at General Motors Company; **Quentin L. Roach**, chief procurement officer and senior vice president, global procurement, external manufacturing and supplier development and performance management at Merck & Co., and **Ric Schneider**, senior vice president, global procurement at Starbucks Coffee Company.

Clifton L. Taulbert, founder and president of the Building Community Institute, is the speaker at the Tuesday luncheon. Mr. Taulbert is a Pulitzer-nominated author and has served as a guest professor at Harvard University, among others.

A Networking Continental Breakfast leads the day on Wednesday, followed by a plenary session titled *View from the Top: The Future of Minority Business Development*. NMSDC Vice Chairman **Shelley Stewart, Jr.**,

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Conference Speakers

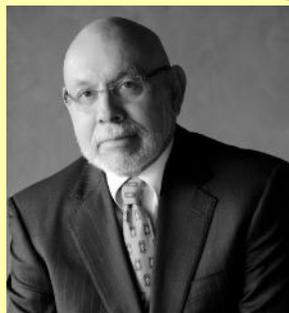
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who is vice president of sourcing and logistics and chief procurement officer at DuPont Company, will moderate the session. The featured speakers are **David Hernandez**, chief executive officer of Liberty Power, a minority-owned business, and **Keith E. Wandell**, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Harley-Davidson Inc. **Jacqueline Pata**, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest and largest American Indian and Alaska Native advocacy organization in the United States, is the featured speaker at Wednesday's Luncheon.

The conference includes a leadership development series with separate tracks for NMSDC Regional Council presidents, minority business owners and supplier diversity professionals, as well as 20 educational workshops covering a variety of topics related to developing strong minority suppliers, creating and maintaining a world-class supplier diversity process, global supply chain management, and more. Panelists represent more than 45 member corporations such as BP America, Boeing, Citigroup, Colgate-Palmolive, Delta Air Lines, Ford Motor Company, Harley-Davidson, Ingersoll Rand Company, IBM, General Motors, Pacific Gas, Starbucks, Toyota and Wells Fargo.

The conference culminates Wednesday night with a black-tie Awards Banquet that will honor the Corporation, Suppliers, Minority Supplier Development Leader and Council of the Year.

Q&A with J. Joe Mena



VITAL STATISTICS

Title: Conference Co-Chairman and President

Company: Summit Container Corporation

Headquarters: Monument, Colorado

Number of Employees: 45

Certified by NMSDC: 1989; Corporate Plus[®] Member since 1998

NMSDC: Tell us about your business.

J. Joe Mena: Summit Container Corporation is a 28-year-old custom corrugated packaging manufacturer. We provide packaging on a Just in Time (JIT) basis for a number of Fortune 500 companies. Our corporate office and primary manufacturing facility is located in Monument, Colorado. We also have three other facilities located in Downingtown, Pennsylvania; Arvada (Denver), Colorado and another that will open in November in Dallas, Texas. We plan to have another location in Portland, Oregon, early next year.

From 1980 to 1988 I was chief executive officer of a publicly-held oil and gas exploration and development company in Denver. I left the oil industry in late 1988 and found, by chance, a nearly bankrupt corrugated box company, Summit Packaging, Inc., in Colorado Springs. The owners, a husband and wife team, were looking for a partner. There were not many MBE corrugated manufacturers in the United States and in 1989 I purchased the controlling interest in the company and renamed it Summit Container Corporation. The company was doing about \$500,000 in revenue at that time and had eight employees. Its customer base was primarily in Colorado Springs and consisted of mostly small customers. Today Summit Container has four locations, 45 employees and, this year, we are projecting \$16.5

million in sales. We also use nonprofit workshops throughout the United States to assemble some of our product. On any given day, we will have 350 to 400 clients or employees of four nonprofit workshops helping us build our products.

NMSDC: What has been the most challenging aspect of being an entrepreneur?

JJM: The first two or three years of Summit Container were probably the most challenging. When I purchased the controlling interest in Summit, I had very little cash. I knew my contribution was going to be measured in sweat equity. Times were really tough as the company struggled to pay bills and move forward. Undercapitalization is one of the major reasons that many small firms do not make it and Summit clearly fit into that category. I see small MBEs struggling now trying to make it through the current recession and I can remember when Summit was having a difficult time making it from day-to-day. My heart goes out to them and I truly respect them for being brave enough to take the risk on their businesses.

NMSDC: How did you become involved in the NMSDC Network?

JJM: I had scouted out opportunities that owning a minority-owned business might bring before I left the oil industry. One evening, Minority Enterprises Inc. (the predecessor to The Rocky Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council) was having a networking meeting and my wife and I went to it. As soon as I joined Summit, I called and got an appointment to meet the Executive Director, Jim Laurie. Summit joined the Denver Council in April 1989 and we have been involved with the Council ever since.

NMSDC: How has NMSDC certification impacted your entrepreneurial journey?

JJM: Summit's NMSDC certification has very positively impacted my entrepreneurial journey. It has opened doors at a number of major corporations, which has resulted in opportunities for my company. Early important contacts were made with US WEST, Coors Brewing and Eastman Kodak. These three companies had significant presence in Colorado at the time and they were our first three customers. US WEST was involved in an industry project with

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Q&A with J. Joe Mena
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other major regional Bell operating companies to determine how they would protect their circuit packs from damage from Electrostatic Discharge (ESD). We had been working with another customer in this same area and were able to bring our expertise in this narrow area to the table. In 1992 we were awarded the job to convert US WEST's internal circuit pack packaging to ESD protective packaging. This was a major event as it introduced us to the telecommunications industry where we do the majority of our sales now. Sometimes I believe that the corporate supplier diversity advocates or managers in some of the large companies do not realize how very important they are to MBEs when they provide an introduction. The business that resulted from this one introduction at US WEST has transformed, over the years, to be the heart of my company.

NMSDC: Which NMSDC programs have you participated in? What did you take away from the experience?

JJM: I attended the NMSDC's Advanced Management Education Program in November 1996. Even though I have an MBA and had been CEO of a publicly-owned oil and gas company for eight years, I still learned a great deal from attending the AMEP. Only the best MBEs were invited to attend and I was surrounded by outstanding business performers. I gained a lot of friends from my week there and learned a lot from participating in the business case studies. Even more than that, I learned a great deal about the NMSDC and what great opportunities were available for me to take advantage of. I was exposed to not only very bright MBEs and Northwestern University academia but also to the top leadership of the NMSDC. Summit Container Corporation was no longer just a name on the MBE list, the NMSDC now knew who Summit Container was and what we did. My message to other MBEs would be to take advantage of programs like the AMEP whenever you can. It is extremely low-cost and effective marketing.

NMSDC: Is there anything else you want to share about your journey as an MBE?

JJM: What I would like to share with other MBEs is that they should understand that their objective in the business world is not just to be an MBE. They should focus on providing the best quality of goods and services at the right price, for sure, but what will separate them from their competition is the positive experience their customers have in working with them. I would tell them to always develop a sense of urgency and to always exceed their customer's expectations. I take delight in working with people in major corporations who do not know Summit is an MBE but who choose Summit because we are the best company doing what we do. That is when an MBE's business really arrives—when you are judged only by how you perform and not who you are.

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY COUNCIL EXPANDS SERVICE AREA

In a collaborative effort aimed at ensuring that NMSDC corporate members and minority business enterprises (MBEs) in upstate New York continue to receive outstanding service from the NMSDC network, the New York and New Jersey Minority Supplier Development Council (NY/NJMSDC) has agreed to expand and provide service to the former members and MBEs of the Upstate New York Regional Minority Supplier Development Council. This transition extends NY/NJ MSDC's coverage area to include the entire state of New York and northern and central New Jersey.

"Our strategic focus for the NMSDC network is to provide sufficient support for our certified MBEs and corporate members," said NMSDC President Joset B. Wright. "I commend Upstate New York Board Chairman Mark Zaremski of Johnson & Johnson for working with NY/NJ

MSDC Board Chair Pauline Gebon of Adecco and President Lynda Ireland to create a solution that aligns with NMSDC's mission. The NY/NJ Council is a two-time Council of the Year winner, and I am confident that Ms. Gebon and Ms. Ireland will provide strong leadership to our constituents affected by this acquisition and territory expansion."

The acquisition and expansion brings to 36 the total number of NMSDC affiliate councils.

A search is underway for a director to manage the upstate service area, where both MBEs and corporate members, educational institutions and government agencies will have an increased focus on developing and assisting in the establishment of supplier diversity initiatives, training programs and match-making

services. All current and future programs offered to the downstate constituency will be offered upstate. As part of the plan, NY/NJ MSDC will establish a satellite office in the Rochester area to conduct site visits as part of the certification process for MBEs, facilitate outreach activities and interact in a support role on corporate member activities and assist with corporate member needs.

During this period of transition, all NY/NJ MSDC staff members will be available via telephone and, if necessary, in person to support the growth and development of the upstate area. All inquiries related to this acquisition should be directed to the NY/NJ MSDC at 212-502-5663.