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2008 Legislative Session Highlights

2008 was a successful legislative session, particularly for issues impacting Maryland's small, women, and minority-owned businesses. Session highlights include:

- **SB 301 - Procurement - Small Business Reserve Program - Eligibility Modifications:**

This bill raises specified average annual gross sales thresholds for determining firms' eligibility for the Small Business Reserve Program (SBR), and includes a new threshold for architectural and engineering firms. It also adds the Maryland Transportation Authority and the new Department of Information Technology to the list of agencies subject to the program. Finally, it requires the Department of General Services to submit a report to the General Assembly by October 1, 2011 regarding whether the bill has had an adverse effect on small businesses that previously qualified for SBR based on the criteria in effect under current law.

- **SB 606 - State Government - Brokerage and Investment Banking Services - Use of Certified Minority Business Enterprises:** This bill requires the State Treasurer, the Maryland Automobile Insurance Fund, the Injured Workers' Insurance Fund, and the State Retirement and Pension System to attempt to use minority business enterprises (MBE) to the greatest extent feasible to provide brokerage and investment management services. The bill also requires the four entities to work with the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs (GOMA) to develop guidelines to implement the bill's provisions and to submit annual reports to GOMA and the General Assembly on their use of MBE brokerage and investment firms and their efforts to encourage greater use of MBE firms.

- **SB 686 - Task Force to Study the Procurement of Health and Social Services by State Agencies:** This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Procurement of Health and Social Services by State Agencies, staffed by the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of General Services. The task force must report its preliminary findings and recommendations by November 30, 2008 and its final findings and recommendations by November 30, 2009. The bill takes effect July 1, 2008 and terminates June 30, 2010.

- **SB 847 - Task Force on the Minority Business Enterprise Activities:** This bill establishes a Task Force on the Minority Business Enterprise Program and Equity Investment Capital, jointly staffed by the Department of General Services (DGS) and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). The task force must report its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly and develop draft legislation by December 1, 2009. The bill takes effect October 1, 2008 and terminates December 1, 2009.

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[More MBE related Bills...](#)

Special Secretary's Corner



With the arrival of Spring comes new opportunities and a renewed focus on Maryland's small and minority firms. Steady progress continues to be made across this great state.

Governor Martin O'Malley, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, with support from the Maryland General Assembly, have succeeded in finding innovative solutions to

Maryland-Microsoft Partnership

The State of Maryland is working with the Microsoft Corporation to create a partnership that will increase opportunities for Maryland's small, women and minority-owned information technology firms. Thus far, the collaboration has resulted in Maryland MBEs participating in Microsoft's Bootcamp Program and the Tuck School of Business, Executive Education Program at Dartmouth College.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

Enactment of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommendations presented the State of Maryland with opportunities that will result in the creation of up to 60,000 new jobs and the arrival of as many as 28,000 new households. In order to coordinate and oversee the implementation of all State action to support the missions of the Federal facilities in the State affected by the BRAC recommendations, the Governor's Subcabinet on BRAC was created. Chaired by Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and comprised of several State agencies, the Subcabinet developed a Statewide BRAC Action Plan to address the many challenges facing Maryland in the coming years. As a member of the Subcabinet, GOMA developed a Small and Minority Business Action Plan that includes initiatives to ensure that small and minority-owned businesses have access to State and Federal BRAC procurement activity. Such initiatives include:

BRAC Small and Minority Business Opportunities Study: GOMA, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, has commissioned a Study aimed at identifying public procurement opportunities; providing the pathway for accessing opportunities; and identifying the minority firms most ready to pursue military related business activity. The Study is expected to be completed by the first week of June.

BRAC Small and Minority Business Advisory Board: A 34-member Advisory Board was created to function as a working group to assist in the identification and dissemination of information; to strengthen MBEs' communication with the Department of Defense (DoD) and BRAC affected military installations; and create business partnerships through mentoring to increase successful contract awards with the State of Maryland and DoD.

For more information on these initiatives, contact Michelle Wright, BRAC Program Manager at 410-767-8232.

[Download a copy of the BRAC Action Plan...](#)

EMPRESA Technical Assistance & Training Program

In an effort to meet the growing demands of Maryland's Hispanic business community, GOMA launched a new initiative in October 2007 known as the EMPRESA Program (Enterprise Minority Procurement Resource Educational Series Assistance). EMPRESA, which means firm or business in **Spanish**, is a tailored technical assistance and training program designed specifically for Hispanic entrepreneurs. The program offers a series of training workshops presented entirely in **Spanish**, along with the course curriculum and related materials.



We received an overwhelming response to the first training session that was held on March 19th in Odenton, MD. Approximately 40 entrepreneurs attended. Plans are underway for the next training session which is targeted for June. For more information contact Bill Villanueva, Hispanic Business Outreach Manager, at 410-767- 8232.

Calendar of Events

2008 National Symposium, Research to Roadmap: Accelerate the Growth of Businesses Owned by Women of Color - May 6-7 / Center for Women's Business Research, [more info](#)

First Annual State of Black Baltimore Conference - May 8 / Greater Baltimore Urban League, [more info](#)

protect Maryland's priorities, and to strengthen and expand opportunities for Maryland's small businesses and families.

From repealing the \$200 million computer services tax; introducing nation-leading legislation to protect Maryland's homeowners from foreclosure; establishing a new Department of Information Technology to make government more efficient; reducing spending by \$1.8 billion; to providing additional assistance for our Veterans -- Maryland's courageous leadership sets the tone for the rest of the country during these



The Prince George's Chamber of Commerce presents the "2008 Business Legislative Luncheon", featuring Governor Martin O'Malley on May 14, 2008 - University of Maryland College Park, Ritchie Coliseum

[more on Legislative Luncheon](#)

2008 Small Business Assistance Conference - May 29 / Montgomery County Economic Development, [more info](#)

Minority Procurement Conference & Business Expo - June 3 / Hispanic Chamber of Montgomery County, [more info](#)

2008 Regional Purchasing & Small Business Procurement Expo - June 5 / Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Regional Minority Business Opportunities Task Force

[more on Procurement Expo...](#)

Carroll H. Hynson, Sr. Annual Awards Program - June 12 (featuring Special Secretary Luwanda Jenkins as Keynote) / Black Chamber of Commerce of Anne Arundel County, [more info](#)

5th Annual Spring Breakfast and 2008 Awards Program - June 13 / Maryland Washington Minority Contractors Association, [more info](#)

"Meet the State" Minority Business Enterprise Procurement Fair / Governor's Office of Minority Affairs and Prince George's County Small Business Initiative - **June 18 - SAVE THE DATE!**

[Click here](#) to view full calendar of events...

challenging economic times.

While this newsletter highlights a few of the State's initiatives for small and minority businesses, more is yet to come. Stay tuned!

*Luwanda W. Jenkins
Special Secretary*

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