

Regional Roundtables Explore Women’s Business Ownership

by Kathryn Tobias, Senior Editor

In late June and early July, the Office of Advocacy’s regional advocates have been convening women’s business roundtables to talk with women business owners and stakeholders about their experiences in starting a business and the challenges they face. The roundtable locations include Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Iowa, Colorado, California, and Washington State.

Concurrent with the roundtables, Advocacy published a fact sheet on new women-owned business data from the Census Bureau’s 1997, 2002, and 2007 Surveys of Business Owners. The data examine business ownership by women, men, equally women and men, and publicly held firms. Among the findings are the following:

- Women’s share of the total

number of businesses increased between 1997 and 2007.

- By employment size, less than 1 percent of all women-owned employer firms and less than 2 percent of those owned by men had 100 or more employees.

- The percentage of women-owned employers declined from 1997 to 2002, then increased from 2002 to 2007.

- Women’s business density—the number of women-owned businesses per 1,000 persons in a state—increased in most states over the period. Nationally, the density of women-owned businesses increased from 19.9 in 1997 to 22.5 in 2002 to 25.8 in 2007.

Like other businesses, women face barriers to entry that include access to capital and regulatory burdens; these were a focus of discussion at the roundtables.

To learn more about the regional roundtables, visit Advocacy’s website at www.sba.gov/content/advocacy-hosts-nationwide-small-business-roundtables-women-entrepreneurship.

Look for Request for New Research

The Office of Advocacy will be issuing a Request for Quotes (RFQ) for new research in the coming weeks. The link to full details will be available via Advocacy’s Research Listserv, website, and Twitter page. To join the Listserv, visit <http://web.sba.gov/list>. The office’s website is www.sba.gov/advocacy. Follow us on Twitter at [@advocacysba](https://twitter.com/advocacysba).



On a recent listening tour of the West Coast, Chief Counsel Winslow Sargeant met with Intersect Founder Peter Rinearson. Also participating were Advocacy’s Director of Regional Affairs Michael Landweber and Region X Advocate Jennifer Clark. Turn to [page 3](#) for more of the story.

In This Issue

Message from the Chief Counsel

West Coast Businesses Tell Washington: Let Us Innovate! 3

Regional Update

Roundtables on Women’s Business Ownership 1

Alabama and Florida Coasts Bounce Back from Oil Spill .4

Research Notes

Request for New Research Forthcoming. 1

Regulatory News

Gainful Employment Rule Finalized. 2

Ongoing SBREFA Panels 2

Regulatory News

Department of Education Finalizes Gainful Employment Rule

by *Kia Dennis, Assistant Chief Counsel*

On July 26, 2010, the Department of Education published a notice of proposed rulemaking entitled “Program Integrity: Gainful Employment.” The proposal established measures to determine whether certain postsecondary educational programs lead to gainful employment in recognized occupations, and it set conditions for such programs’ continued eligibility for federal student financial assistance.

Advocacy filed comments on this rule on September 8, 2010, conveying small businesses’ concerns that the economic analysis failed to capture the potential impact on small institutions and

that the proposed metrics for defining “gainful employment” put small institutions at a disadvantage. Advocacy also relayed small institutions’ concerns that they would not have the resources necessary to assess their compliance with the rule and identify the methods necessary to remedy noncompliance.

The final rule implemented several changes that address some of these issues, and it gives all programs three years to improve. To learn more, see the Education Department’s press release at www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/gainful-employment-regulations.

The Small Business Advocate

Editor Rebecca Krafft

Managing Editor Rob Kleinsteuber

Production Assistant Tymillia Johnson

The Small Business Advocate (ISSN 1045-7658) is published monthly by the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Office of Advocacy and is distributed to SBA field staff, members of the U.S. Congress, and the public. *The Small Business Advocate* is available without charge from the Office of Advocacy, U.S. Small Business Administration, MC 3114, Washington, DC 20416; advocacy@sba.gov; (202) 205-6533. For delivery changes, send your current address label with your request to the above address. For electronic delivery of this newsletter, visit, <http://web.sba.gov/list>.



Federal Recycling Program
Printed on recycled paper.

Ongoing Small Business Advocacy Review Panels under SBREFA

The Office of Advocacy is participating in an unprecedented number of SBREFA panels this summer. The Environmental Protection Agency currently has 12 regulatory proposals at various stages of the panel process, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration currently has two in the earliest stage. Here’s a complete list.

—David Rostker, Assistant Chief Counsel

Environmental Protection Agency

Pre-panel

Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Steam Electric Power Generating Point Source Category
National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for Secondary Aluminum Production Risk and Technology Review (RTR)
National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: Long-Term Revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR)

Formal Notification by the Agency

Control of Air Pollution from Motor Vehicles: Tier 3 Motor Vehicle Emission and Fuel Standards
Financial Responsibility Requirements under CERCLA Section 108(b) for Classes of Facilities in the Hard Rock Mining Industry
Lead Renovation Repair & Painting Program: Commercial and Public Buildings
NESHAP for Brick and Structural Clay Products Manufacturing
Petroleum Refinery Sector RTR and New Source Performance Standards (NSPS)

Convened by the Agency

NESHAP for New Residential Wood Heaters
Stormwater Revision to Address Discharges from Developed Sites
Greenhouse Gas NSPS for Electric Utility Steam Generating Units
NESHAP and RTR for the Mineral Wool Industry

Date Convened

August 4, 2010
December 6, 2010
June 2, 2011
June 9, 2011

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Pre-panel

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs
Combustible Dust

Message from the Chief Counsel

West Coast Businesses Tell Washington: Let Us Innovate!

by Dr. Winslow Sargeant, Chief Counsel for Advocacy

As the independent voice for small business, Advocacy makes it a priority to hear the concerns small businesses have throughout the country. Since I started as chief counsel 11 months ago, I have visited 15 states to assess the health of small businesses and to listen for consistent themes. What I have found is that small business owners generally remain upbeat about overcoming the odds and successfully achieving their goals. The entrepreneurial spirit as exemplified by small businesses remains strong and is waiting to be unleashed. What is holding back this wave? Access to capital and regulatory uncertainty.

Recently, I visited the West Coast to listen to small business owners and share how the Office of Advocacy works for them. My first stop was to speak in Sacramento at California Small Business Day 2011 at the state capitol. At the event, state legislators recognized 75 small businesses for their achievements in growing their businesses and contributing to their communities. The diversity of businesses and business owners was an exhilarating sight.

Over the course of a week, I participated in 10 roundtables in California, Oregon, and Washington,

meeting with a broad cross-section of local business owners and their representatives. Access to capital remains a top issue. A number of businesses said they would like to expand their hiring and enter new markets, but without capital this is nearly impossible. While the economy makes banks and investors reluctant to take risks, we need to continue to work hard to overcome this disconnect between cautious lenders and optimistic small business owners.

Uncertainty and inconsistency in government regulations and processes factor into many of the decisions made by participants in our roundtables. I met with medical device manufacturers and investors in Sunnyvale, California, who shared deep concerns about the Food and Drug Administration's 510(k) regulatory process. I discussed the issue with the group of executives and related details of Advocacy's January 2011 comment letter to the FDA, which documented small business concerns with the proposed changes to the 510(k) approval process.

Other concerns came up again and again. In Milpitas, California, I was joined by Congress-

man Mike Honda for a roundtable discussion focused on the H1-B visa approval process. Technology companies depend on H1-B visas to hire foreign workers when certain unique expertise is not available domestically. The difficulties in the current process are removing H1-B visas as an option for hiring the best and brightest talents. Roundtable participants in Portland and Seattle echoed the same sentiment.

When Advocacy hears about government regulations and processes that are barriers to small business, we work hard with other federal agencies to seek alternatives. Seeing so many hardworking businesses on my trip reinforces my commitment to ensure that government is working as a partner rather than an adversary.

In Seattle, I participated in a green technologies roundtable at McKinstry, Inc., a global leader in green building and energy efficiency monitoring. Congressman Jay Inslee joined this discussion,

Continued on page 4



Photos from Seattle's Startup Weekend courtesy of Eugene Hsu.



Alabama and Florida Coasts Bouncing Back

by Mark Berson, Region IV Advocate

On April 20, 2010, the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform resulted in the deaths of 11 men working on the platform and injuries to 17 others. The nation was transfixed as the leaking wellhead gushed almost 5 million barrels of oil from the sea floor.

The accident is considered the worst manmade environmental disaster in the history of the United States. In addition to the environmental damage, the tourism and hospitality industry along the Alabama and Florida coast took a staggering economic blow. Although the Florida panhandle was affected more by the perception of oil washing onto its beaches, the Alabama coast, with less than 30 miles of shoreline, suffered the brunt of the disaster. As the advocate for these areas, I was asked by several local organiza-

tions to participate in discussions regarding ways that they could better coordinate recovery efforts with federal agencies.

After visiting several owners of small businesses in both states last month, it is encouraging to report that their sales have recovered to levels approximating those of a robust 2009. I visited owners of restaurants, shops, retail seafood stores, and condominium rental companies, as well as elected and appointed city officials and representatives of chambers of commerce. In fact, Alabama beaches registered seven consecutive months of retail tax increases.

I can personally attest to the high volume of vehicular traffic in the area and am encouraged by the rebound experienced by many of the small businesses. The resiliency of the people is to be admired.

Message, from page 3

which focused on challenges facing startups in this growing sector.

At my last stop in Seattle, I was inspired by the energy and innovation of the entrepreneurs who have embraced the startup culture. I spoke to a large group of aspiring entrepreneurs who were brought together by an organization called Startup Weekend, which takes a novel approach to helping teams of highly motivated individuals form companies over an intense period of 54 hours. None of these participants was thinking about regulations. They just wanted to turn a vision into a reality, and maybe even to change the world a little bit—just like every entrepreneur who has ever started a business. And that's why Advocacy will continue to reach out across the country to give voice to those willing to join the list of America's great innovators and business creators.

U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Advocacy
Mail Code 3114
409 Third Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20416

Official Use
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Return Service Requested