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News from SBA's Regional Administrator

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PACIFIC REGION QUARTERLY

Greetings and welcome to the first edition of the Region IX Newsletter. As Regional Administrator for California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and Guam, it's an honor to serve in the Obama Administration and serve some of the best entrepreneurs and small businesses in the nation.

SBA received some exciting news last week. President Obama announced that he has elevated Administrator Mills to a cabinet-level official. This change reflects the importance that the President places on small businesses as the driving force behind our economy.

FY2011 was a busy, record-breaking year for SBA. Last year, the SBA broke the agency's all-time lending high, supporting over \$30 billion in loans to over 60,000 small businesses. Region IX led the way supporting more than \$6.4 billion in loans to over 9,400 small businesses.

I traveled across the region to meet with small business owners in order to listen to their feedback and ideas and bring their input back to Washington, D.C. I also shared with them the benefits of the Small Business Jobs Act, Affordable Care Act, and the American Jobs Act. In addition, I was appointed to the White House Business Council (WHBC) and convened WHBC Roundtables around the region.

The region embraced some changes last year. We welcomed a new District Director, Victor Parker, to Los Angeles. The Fresno office moved into a new building downtown to better serve their clients. Our strong commitment to the small business community remains the same, however, which is why offices throughout Region IX continue to build on past successes in support of small business.

We hope that each edition will have something for all small business stakeholders, including entrepreneurs and small business owners, lenders and all our partners in the small business community.

If you have any suggestions for content, we'd love to hear your ideas, so feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year!

Elizabeth Echols

2011 Highlights from around Region IX



RA Echols with SBA California District Directors at [CA Hispanic Chambers of Commerce](#) 32nd Annual Convention. Echols delivered keynote remarks.

RA Echols speaking at [Moneywise's](#) Empowerment Tour in Sacramento.



RA Echols with SBA San Diego District



Director Ruben Garcia and SBA Associate Administrator for Field Operations Rob Hill at [E-World Recyclers](#) in Vista, CA.

RA Echols with California 2011 Small Business Person of the Year Barry Levin, Chairman and CEO, [Snak King Corporation](#) and Acting Los Angeles District Director Monique Fortenberry.



RA Echols at Arizona's [e200](#) graduation. She's standing from left to right with class instructor Guillermo Quiroga, graduate April Tinhorn, SBA Lender Relations Specialist Craig Jordan and Arizona District Director Robert J. Blaney.



The e200 program has been described as a 'mini-MBA' by participants and is designed to help high potential businesses across the country to grow by providing them the network, resources and motivation required to build a sustainable business of size and scale.

RA Echols speaking on panel at [White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders](#) event in Silicon Valley.



RA Echols presenting a check to [Rural Nevada](#)



[Development Corporation](#). RNDC is one of the first 20 nationwide participants in SBA's [Intermediary Lending Pilot Program](#).

RA Echols with Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi at a small business roundtable in San Francisco.



The Los Angeles District Office welcomed a new District Director, [Victor Parker](#). Parker has extensive leadership experience, bringing nearly 20 years in management experience to the table, most recently as



the division managing director at Myers Stevens Group.

The district office manages a loan portfolio that financed more than 2,477 businesses with \$1.58 billion in fiscal 2011.

TIME FOR A NEW YEAR'S BUSINESS MAKEOVER?

Once the hustle and bustle of the holiday season subsides, many small business owners take a moment to reflect on both the results of the just completed year, and the prospects for the New Year. For some, such reflection may cause a certain amount of apprehension, especially if revenues are down and the business seems 'stale.'

Here are seven actions every business owner can take to 'tune up' the firm for the upcoming year:

Re-validate your business model. Your business model is the foundation of your business and your business plan is the structure. Taking a hard look at your business model means you'll look at the basic premise for offering a product or service to the marketplace. The following three questions are addressed and answered: 1) How does this company create value? 2) How does the company deliver the value it creates? 3) How well does the company monetize the value it delivers? The answers that evolve from these three questions will provide the guide for change in ways that may fundamentally re-shape how the business is structured, how it operates or what it sells.

Refresh your value proposition. The value proposition provides you with the answer to three questions every consumer has when they are in the market for goods or services: Why should I buy this? Why should I buy it from you? Why should I buy it now? Consumers who respond to good value propositions go from the 'I Want' stage to the 'I Need' stage, and then become customers. Refreshing your value proposition involves re-examining each element the business has been highlighting and communicating for the past year, and comparing those elements to what consumers are attracted to, and respond to emotionally.

Update your marketing plan. The art and science of marketing is being able to communicate that a business has the right product, at the right price, for the right consumer, at the right time. The marketing plan is a reflection of the strategies and tactics a company plans to use to get the value proposition message out. Reviewing the last year of marketing strategies and tactics, then looking at how effective they were in generating revenues is a crucial exercise that better enables you to evaluate whether or not changes need to be made.

Update your operating plan. The beginning of a new year is a perfect time to look back and evaluate all the things that 'went wrong' in terms of day-to-day business operations. Whether it's a bad hire, A/P or A/R getting out of hand, or a supply chain delay, all should be examined. Taking a fresh look at the problems that cropped up each year, and revising the applicable policy, procedure or protocol to address these issues will help ensure they are not repeated.

Re-energize the customer experience. A truly outstanding customer experience results in three

major outcomes: 1) It generates consumer feelings of goodwill toward the company that are evident before, during and after a sale is made 2) It turns a consumer into a committed customer 3) It results in customers telling others of their positive experiences. A major key to structuring and sustaining an outstanding customer experience is to look for ways to delight, surprise, reward and communicate with customers frequently and meaningfully.

Re-engage your employees. Just as no two employees have the same talents or personality, they all are in various stages of motivation at any one time. And, after a long year of struggling to be a profitable, thriving business, employees may feel a bit strung out. Do something unexpected and unusual to shake up the routine. Maybe periodically hand out free movie tickets or restaurant gift cards. A company in Florida had an annual 'mystery trip' once a year that was talked about for weeks afterward... and was anticipated for months.

Recharge your life away from the business. While this last resolution cannot really be classified as a 'business resolution,' it can make a profound difference in a business owner's perspective. Finding a reasonable balance between personal and business demands, and taking time away from the company on a regular basis fosters a better mental outlook, improves creativity, renews optimism, and increases productivity.

A NEW AND IMPROVED SBA CAPLINES PROGRAM

The U. S. Small Business Administration understands that it is not easy to operate a small business even in good economic times. And, as we look back over the past few years, the credit situation – although improved from 2008 – has had a major impact on the small business community.

That is why the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Small Business Jobs Act, which provided key enhancements such as temporary higher government guaranties on SBA loans and permanently increasing SBA loan limits, was so critical in getting capital flowing again to small businesses.

As a result, SBA was proud to report record breaking loan approvals for Fiscal Year 2011, supporting \$30 billion in small business lending with over 60,000 loans made to small businesses through our two largest loan programs.

SBA is regularly meeting with lenders and resource partners to get feedback on ways to improve our loan programs and services. And, this past year, with the help of all 68 district offices, the SBA engaged over 150 community lenders in all 50 states to provide comments on ways that the SBA's CAPLines Program could work more effectively for both SBA lenders and small businesses themselves as this program had been underutilized.

SBA's CAPLines Program helps small businesses meet their short-term and cyclical working capital needs.

The SBA provides up to an 85 percent guarantee and there are four loan programs under CAPLines:

Seasonal Line of Credit Program, Contract Loan Program, Builders Line Program, and Working Capital Line.

The new and improved CAPLines Program will provide business owners with the working capital they need to take advantage of new opportunities as they continue to grow their business and create jobs.

Small businesses that use CAPLines will also benefit from the new increased SBA 7(a) loan limit of \$5 million effective as a result of the Jobs Act. For those small businesses looking to vie for bigger contracts, this will help them be financially prepared to compete and win.

Whether you are a startup, currently in business, or a business that is experiencing difficulties, SBA has programs to help you along the way.

As you take the time to evaluate your business needs and set goals for this year, don't forget to reach out to SBA resources such as SCORE, Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Centers.

They provide counseling and can assist you with developing or updating a business plan, marketing plan, or a loan package to take to the lender.

SBA is extremely proud of these counseling partnerships and what they have to offer small business

clients. To locate resources in your part of town or to contact the local SBA office, visit www.sba.gov/localresources.

U.S. Small Business Administration

Region IX

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