

Larry's Landscaping Has a New Client: The State of Iowa!

Larry Eason is a single parent of six children. Originally, from Chicago, Larry moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in June of 2007 to raise his children in a safe environment and provide them with a good education. Larry owned a construction company in Chicago but was unsure how to bring his business to Cedar Rapids.



Shortly after moving to Cedar Rapids, he was advised to take the Microenterprise classes offered by Iowans for Social and Economic Development (ISED) in Waterloo. ISED is a strong partner and supporter of the Targeted Small Business program. Their business planning classes include a 10-week curriculum of intense workshops at a nominal fee.

Larry took the classes and ISED also recommended that he get certified as a Targeted Small Business (TSB). Although he was gaining new customers, he was losing money as he initially priced his services too low. Larry learned how to price his services competitively and still make a profit. He learned that customers would pay a fair price for quality service.

Continued on page 2

DASeBID MODERNIZING THE BID PROCESS

Nearly every bit of business can be conducted online these days, but in the case of state government bidding processes, extra care needs to be taken to ensure those procedures are fair, open and transparent and conform to various rules and regulations unique to the public sector.

DAS Procurement is continuing to shift to an online bidding process that is designed to meet these stringent requirements while better meeting the needs of prospective bidders. The DASeBid program, adapted for state government and initially implemented at the University of Iowa, dramatically streamlines the bid letting process while inherently broadening the ability for potential vendors to participate. Online bid and response software is currently available to only DAS purchasing staff. The goal is to have all DAS bids posted on DASeBid within the next few months.

Ample space is provided for vendors to provide information when bids are created online. Depending on the particular opportunity, information requested from the vendor will vary. Questions can result in a simple yes or no answer, a more detailed response or possibly require the vendor to provide an attached document.

A pre-existing library of text, including disclaimers, legal requirements and various stipulations related to particular categories of products, is readily accessible for inclusion for particular bid situations. Some bid opportunities require more mandatory language than others.

This powerful procurement software automatically ranks bids based on prices and is an outstanding platform for transparency in the bid process as well as complying with any open records requests on behalf of various vendors or other parties.

Another time and resource saving feature with the new online process is the ability to create templates for frequently-

purchased items such as food or other institution supplies allowing bid templates to be created and quickly posted online. Over 1,500 vendors have already registered with the new online bid program and interest continues to grow with very little confusion regarding how to respond or review available bids. If you have not registered your business as a VENDOR in the new online system, visit http://das.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/vendor_reg.html to register today.

Another cost-saving function of the program is its ability to conduct reverse auctions for a limited period of time. Vendors can view prices submitted by other parties and adjust their numbers. With its inherent time-saving and cost cutting potential and vastly improved transparency, the electronic online bid and response program is a significant advancement for procurement in the public sector.



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Continued from page 1

In February, Larry received a mailing about a free TSB workshop called "Doing Business with the State of Iowa". He listened and learned valuable information about the bid process and met state purchasing professionals from the Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the State Universities.

"I was so glad I took the time to attend the TSB workshop on doing business with Iowa. I learned about getting my business registered as vendor with the State. I met folks from the DOT who gave me advice and information on their letting process. As a registered vendor with the Iowa DOT, I now receive notice of upcoming lettings. I also learned that if you're a TSB in Iowa, you are eligible for a bond waiver through the Dept of Inspection & Appeals".

Larry found out about a bid to mow the lawn of a rest stop in Cedar County. Through the process, he learned that a bond is required, but he did not have the funds to secure a bond. He called Mary Montgomery, certification officer at DIA, and she explained the bond waiver granted to TSBs. Armed with the bond waiver, and a very competitive bid, Larry won the contract to mow the rest area in Cedar County. His one-year contract has been going well, and he's looking forward to bidding in the future on lawn care opportunities at additional rest areas in Linn County.

Most importantly, he's grateful for the opportunity to show the Iowa DOT his quality service and build a relationship.

Sometimes opportunity knocks, but more often, YOU have to knock on opportunity's door! Larry learned to leverage the procurement aspect of the TSB program and the bond waiver benefit. He listened to the advice of the experts, was educated and followed-through with perseverance.

Larry's future plans include growing the lawn care business and opening a beauty supply store. Larry states it simply: "I listened, I learned, and I applied what I learned and it's worked."

The Targeted Small Business Program Meets with Delegation from Kyrgyzstan

The Iowa Council for International Understanding (ICIU) hosted 10 visitors in April from Kyrgyzstan in conjunction with USAID's Community Connections Program (CCP). The CCP is a three-week, home-stay based practical training opportunity in the U.S. for entrepreneurs, local government officials, legal professionals, non-governmental organization leaders and other professionals from across the former Soviet Union and Serbia.

The CCP is designed to promote public diplomacy through the exchange of cultural ideas and values between participants, U.S. families and local community host organizations.

The group from Kyrgyzstan came to learn about people with disabilities involved in business. As part of their three-week program, the visitors met with public and private organizations and companies to learn about various issues people with disabilities face in the U.S., especially in regards to finding and securing long-term employment.

Two Russian-language interpreters and one escort accompanied the 10 visitors from Kyrgyzstan. Seven of the visitors have disabilities themselves. The group included business owners, disability advocates and journalists.

Lori A. Young, TSB Program Manager explained the Targeted Small Business program to the very attentive audience. The delegation had plenty of questions for Bob Jenkins, a TSB in eastern Iowa and owner of BJ's Honey. Mr. Jenkins has a disability, and he shared his journey to date in managing his business. Jenkins used applied knowledge obtained at a recent TSB workshop, plus his own negotiating and research savvy to land a contract with the University of Iowa. B.J.'s Honey now supplies honey to several campus dormitories.



Bob Jenkins, owner of BJ's Honey (2nd row, far left). Lori Young, TSB Program Manager (in bright blue).



CHECK HERE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb.aspx

SBA OFFERS CONTRACTING RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



Small businesses become certified in Iowa's Targeted Small Business (TSB) program to take advantage of tools and resources offered to start or grow their business. As a TSB, individuals may want to consider one or more additional tools offered through the Small Business Administration (SBA) that can open up additional markets and provide access to more financial resources and technical assistance.

The U.S. Government is the country's largest procurer of goods and services. The federal government is required to establish contracting goals, with at least 23 percent of all government buying targeted to small firms. The 8(a), HUBZone, Service Disabled Veteran-Owned (SDVO) small business and Women Owned Small Business (WOSB) administered by the SBA provide small disadvantaged business preferences in this market.

The 8(a) Business Development program is a business development assistance program for small disadvantaged businesses. The 8(a) program offers a broad scope of assistance to firms that are owned and controlled at least 51% by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Benefits of the program include the following:

Participants can receive sole-source contracts, up to a ceiling of \$4 million for goods and services and \$6.5 million for manufacturing.

8(a) firms are also able to form joint ventures and teams to bid on contracts. A mentor-protégé program allows starting 8(a) companies to learn the ropes from other experienced 8(a) businesses.

The Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) program helps small businesses in urban and rural communities gain preferential access to federal procurement opportunities. The small business must employ 35% of its staff

from some HUBZone area(s). The company must also maintain a "principal office" in the HUBZone.

It is a government-wide goal that at least three percent of all federal contracting dollars go to businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. Service-disabled veteran-owned (SDVO) business owners have access to certain federal contract set-asides. SDVO businesses self certify and register their business at www.vetbiz.gov

The Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract program authorizes contracting officers to set aside certain federal contracts for eligible:

- Women-owned small businesses (WOSBs) or
- Economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses (EDWOSBs)

To be eligible, a firm must be at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more women, and primarily managed by one or more women who are U.S. citizens. The firm must be "small" in its primary industry in accordance with SBA's size standards for that industry. In order for a WOSB to be deemed "economically disadvantaged," its owners must demonstrate economic disadvantage in accordance with the requirements set forth in the final rule. There are two ways to certify for the WOSB program:

- Self certification with supporting documents, or
- Third Party Certification with supporting documents

The SBA has designated 83 NAICS codes as eligible for Federal contracting under the WOSB Program. There are 45 NAICS codes in which WOSBs are underrepresented and 38 NAICS codes in which WOSBs are substantially underrepresented.

It is a bit of work to be certified either through the formal application processes for 8(a) and HUBZone or the self-certification

processes of the SDVO and OSB programs. However, the benefits can be great as they open pathways to new markets for your products and services. For more information go to www.sba.gov, click on contracting and then on small business certifications and audiences. For additional information on these programs, contact SBA at 515.284.4422 (Des Moines office) or 319.362.6405 (Cedar Rapids).

Joe Folsom is the director of the SBA's district office in Des Moines.



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

One of the key benefits of being a certified TSB in Iowa is being able to apply for low-interest loans. Loan interest rates range from 0% to 5% maximum and the term is usually five years and requires 10% down payment. Congratulations to these certified targeted small businesses on their loan awards:

- Afi J Koudadje & Koffi Gangba d/b/a/ Waterloo General Market, Waterloo - \$22,000
- Chris Sanderson d/b/a Keo 24/7 Fun Fitness, Keosauqua - \$40,000
- Cesar A & Dalila Miranda d/b/a Mi Patria, West Des Moines - \$47,500
- Watcharapa Jarnagin d/b/a Jasmine Thai Cuisine, Altoona - \$50,000
- Tammy Tomlinson-Mull d/b/a TJ's Treasures, Tama - \$50,000
- Bob Jenkins d/b/a B.J. Honey, LaPorte City - \$17,887

**How to
Do Business
with the State
of Iowa**

**TARGETED
SMALL
BUSINESS
WORKSHOP**

**Friday,
July 22, 2011
8:30 a.m. -
1:30 p.m.**

PRESENTED BY **THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
HOSTED BY **THE WATERLOO NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**
UNI – CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION • 800 SYCAMORE STREET, ROOM 12, WATERLOO, IA 50703

REGISTER ONLINE BY JULY 15!

www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb.aspx or call **515.725.3100
for more information.**

Free Summer Webinar Series

The Science & Art of Networking!

FEATURING ADAM STEEN, OWNER OF 25 CONNECTIONS!

Spend an hour with Adam and his special guests to learn a new definition of networking as a way to develop yourselves and grow your business or the business you work for in order to generate true economic development. These are not tactics but rather a way to identify what gifts and resources you and your companies possess that can benefit others around you!

The term Networking is viewed by many as a challenge and often times terrifying. In this discussion, Adam Steen will present Networking as a function of “People Based Economic Development”.

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011 • 10:00 AM

Increasing Your Exposure with Google Places

FEATURING ROBERT JACKSON, JR., OWNER OF INTERNET MARKETING PROS

Google Places (previously called Google Maps) allows you to create a business listing, which Google may show in search results. Some benefits of creating your Google Places page include:

- Better rankings when Google displays local search results
- The ability to customize the business page shown on Google
- Analytics regarding views with your Places page
- An opportunity to place coupons on the Places page

While Google Places is free, a listing error can cause Google to reject your business completely. This webinar will show you the correct way to list your business and help you avoid costly mistakes.

MONDAY, JULY 18, 2011 • 10:00 AM

***For log in instructions, visit www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb.aspx
ten minutes before the webinar start time.***

**PROVIDING INFORMATION AND TOOLS TO HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL –
THAT’S WHAT THE **TARGETED SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM** CAN DO FOR YOU!**

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