

- ✓ **Picked up bank deposit**
- ✓ **Checked voicemail**
- ✓ **Reviewed emails and responded**
- ✓ **Checked the 48-Hour Procurement Web site for new opportunities**

Make it part of your morning routine to check the TSB 48-hour procurement Web site! Remember the old saying “the early bird gets the worm.” State agencies post their buying needs 48 hours BEFORE the general public can see them at www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb/tsbsearchlogin.asp, giving certified TSBs an edge. That is one of the advantages to becoming an Iowa certified targeted small business.

To give you a sampling...on the day we accessed the 48-hour procurement Web site there were a total of 33 bid opportunities offered from various state agencies; these are just a few that we found:

- Dept. of Administrative Services needs window envelope with security tint.
- Board of Regents (Iowa State University specifically) is accepting quotes for a five-year contract to manage concessions and related services for ISU athletic venues.
- The Iowa Dept. of Transportation needs a company to re-roof Building #4 of their Ames office complex.

Access to the 48-hour procurement Web site is restricted to Iowa certified TSBs. If you haven't requested your password for the 48-hour procurement Web site simply send an email to smallbusiness@iowalifechanging.com, with the subject line as TSB 48-Hour Procurement Access. In the body of your message include your name, your business name, business location and mail address.

If you haven't taken the steps to become a certified Iowa TSB, visit the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals Web site at <http://dia.iowa.gov> and click on the link for Targeted Small Businesses to review the qualifications and to apply. You are missing opportunities every day that are just a click away!

\$477,700 in Targeted Small Business (TSB) Financial Assistance Awarded

May 2009 through September 2009

Congratulations to these targeted small business owners on their endeavors to start, enhance or expand their business.

Visit www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb.aspx to find out more on the TSB Financial Assistance Program and to access the TSB financial assistance application.

Dr. Jennifer J. Hirschberger — Hirschberger Chiropractic, Cedar Rapids

Jamica Haney — Honest Tips Nail Salon, Des Moines

Juan O. Rodriguez — Diversity Insurance, Inc., Des Moines

Kim Cunningham — Xtreme Limousine, Boone

Kelly Dennis-McMann — The Grooming Den, Iowa City

Deborah Haus — The Dog Haus, LLC, Des Moines

Kelsey Vogt & Mary Vogt — TH3 Restaurant & Lounge, Galva

Patricia Artis — Artis Home Gallerie, Inc., West Des Moines

David James — DJs Rib Shack, Clinton

John Marks — Marks Lawn Care, Grundy Center

Jeri Kemple — ECOMAIDS, Des Moines

Luis Guzman & Elizabeth Zamora — Tortilleria Iowa Mexico, Des Moines

Amanda Rairden — Little Clippers Child Development Center, Tiffin

Jeannie Everly — Ardent Lighting Group, LLC, Knoxville

Wendy Vonderhaar and Jill Boeding — Expert Tees Design & Sign Shop, West Point

LaVancha Walker — L&J Kitchen BBQ House, Coraville

CHECK HERE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

www.iowalifechanging.com/business/tsb.aspx



Donna Lowery Program Manager
Lori Young Marketing & Compliance Manager
smallbusiness@iowalifechanging.com
800.532.1215



Iowa Department of Transportation Small Business Contracts Program benefits Small Construction Companies

Perhaps you've heard the old saying, "If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch." Historically, small construction companies have had difficulties breaking into the high construction business and competing against larger and more established firms. The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) understands that struggle for TSBs and has developed an exciting program to address this challenge.

The Small Business Development Contracts (SBDC) program is designed to promote smaller scale contracts with the Iowa DOT that are better suited for small construction companies.

The DOT cites Iowa Code 15.102, paragraph six, to define who qualifies as a small construction business:

- Fewer than 20 employees OR annual gross income of less than four million dollars
- Iowa based company
- Operated for-profit and under single management
- Completion and acceptance of the Small Business self-certification application
- And, of course, the ability and means to complete the work as defined under the contract

HOW THE PROGRAM WILL WORK

The SBDC program is scheduled to launch December 2009. Through SBDC the Iowa DOT plans to award 20 contracts across six defined regions in Iowa. Contracts will be \$100,000 or less and will cover a variety of types of work. Project scopes will include, but are not limited to: tree removal, pavement marking and ROW fence repair/

replacement. Contracts under SBDC do not involve Federal money, thus avoiding Davis-Bacon wage thresholds, resulting in less paperwork for the business owner and DOT. Small Business Development projects WILL be listed on the 48-hour procurement Web site along with any other DOT projects.

LEARN MORE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SBDC BID OPPORTUNITIES

Check the Iowa DOT Web site

<http://www.iowadot.gov/> under the "Doing Business" link. Once the program is launched, new contract bids will be posted on the Web site the third Tuesday of each month and advertised in local newspapers. For more information, contact Roger Bierbaum, Office of Contracts with the Iowa DOT at dot.contracts@dot.iowa.gov or 515-239-1414.

Build a Strong Workforce - Employ the Talents of Iowans with Disabilities



Workforce development and retention of workers at all skill levels are two of the major issues facing small and large businesses today. One solution to workforce shortage issues is tapping into non-traditional sources of labor such as Iowans with disabilities and accessing tax-funded services to enhance business connections.

Many Iowa businesses are unaware of the local Iowa Vocation and Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) offered to employers throughout Iowa. In an effort to expand awareness and business partnerships, IVRS has recently launched a new initiative that commits resources to maximize business relationships. The goal of this initiative is to assist business and industry to meet their human capital needs now and into the future.

People with disabilities represent the single largest minority group seeking employment in today's market and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) provides resources and services tailored to help Iowa businesses access this underutilized labor pool. IVRS is a publicly-funded employment resource for businesses working with over eleven-thousand Iowans to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Currently ten percent of the individuals served by IVRS are ready for employment and 49 percent are in college training programs preparing to enter the labor market in the near future.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation is an underutilized resource that can help develop a pool of skilled workers. Some of the IRVS value-added services offered to Iowa business include:

- Consulting, technical assistance and support
- Workplace accommodations and assistive technology
- Financial incentives including access to tax credits and/or deductions available for hiring or accommodating people with disabilities
- Pre-employment services to respond to future employment needs and provide college and other related training to prepare your future workers
- IVRS can also connect these future employees with companies through internships, mentoring opportunities and customized (or on-the-job) training
- Recruitment and referral of qualified applicants
- Retention resources to support current employees who develop or acquire a disability
- Staff training on disability awareness, customer service or other topics related to disabilities in the workplace

To find out more how IVRS partnerships can aid you in meeting diversity and hiring needs, contact Business Specialist June Owens, at june.owens@iowa.gov or 515.724.3425.

IOWA'S FIRST BLACK BUSINESS SUMMIT REPORTED A SUCCESS!

The Iowa Department of Economic Development–Targeted Small Business Program, along with the Iowa Department of Human Rights and ISED Ventures (Iowans for Social & Economic Development) presented the first Iowa Black Business Summit at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown on September 24-25, 2009. The mission of the Summit was to “unleash the full potential of Iowa’s Black business owners and lay the foundation for their continued success and contributions to the economic vitality of our communities, cities and our state.”

The Summit featured 27 speakers and panelists who are professionals in finance, business and marketing. Workshop topics included business plan development, growth and expansion, doing business with the state of Iowa and landing federal contracts. The day also included a special panel discussion with four of Iowa’s Black Legislators - Rep. Wayne Ford, Rep. Ako Abdul-Samad, Rep. Helen Miller and Rep. Phyllis Thede. Reps. Deborah Berry and Kerry Burt were unable to attend the event.

The Summit was a huge success with over 150 attendees from across the state including Davenport and Waterloo, as well as two business



owners from Liberty, Missouri. Visit www.iowabbs.com to review the conference results or to view the photo gallery.

Save the Date, Time for EntreFest Again

The Third Annual EntreFest is on the calendar! Plan to join us in Des Moines, February 25-26, 2010. The two-day conference will help you discover simple techniques to jumpstart your sales, show you how to network to grow your business and give you marketing methods you can implement immediately!

Visit www.EntreFest.com to register or for more information.



OUT OF OFFICE NOTICE: TSB Loan Applications Due Date

TSB loan applications are always due the fourth Friday of each month, HOWEVER, Friday, Nov. 27, 2009, is recognized as a state holiday and our offices will be closed. We are extending the loan application deadline for the month of November to Monday, November 30, 2009.

DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!

We asked Donna Lowery, Program Manager of the Targeted Small Business Program, for tips and advice on submitting a TSB loan application in good working order.

- TYPE YOUR APPLICATION – IT IS A MUST!
- Make sure you answer ALL questions. If a question doesn't apply, put "N/A". Don't leave questions blank.
- Make sure your cash flow projections are realistic and that you could explain how you expect to achieve them.
- Check and double-check all calculations. Make sure your numbers balance.
- Even if you attach your business plan, you cannot simply answer a question saying, "see attached business plan."
- Attach copies of any documents that will help the Loan Review Board in considering your application. Examples include: lease agreements, equipment lists, product lists and/or business plans.

The “Secret” to a Lead-Generating Web site

by Robert Jackson Jr., Deep River Media

Up to this point you’ve probably looked at Web sites the same way most people do - you log on, get whatever information you came for, then you split - off to another Web site or to catch the end of “Dancing with the Stars”. Whether we’re surfing the Net to download a recipe or searching for the start time for that new blockbuster at your local Cineplex, Web site visitors primarily seek information.

As the owner of a business Web site you have a different set of priorities. The most successful business sites are powerful lead generators. But how do you turn yours into a lean, mean, lead-generating machine?

THREE WORDS - CALL TO ACTION

The call to action motivates your visitors to transform themselves from casual surfers into qualified leads. Think about it - if your Web site is not generating qualified leads that you can turn into paying customers, your site is just another line-item expense and not a business asset. An “action” is executed by a visitor when they:

- Pick up the phone to call you
- Give you their email address so you can contact them
- Send you an email
- Fill out an online form

The most powerful call to action element is an online form. Follow these three rules to ensure the technique is used effectively.

1. Put the form near the top right site of your home page.
2. The form should be seen without the visitor having to scroll.
3. Ask only for a name and email address.

Employ a call to action on your Web site and watch your leads grow exponentially.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Jackson, Jr is president of DeepRiverMedia, an Internet marketing & design firm ready to help you develop an affordable, market-focused Internet strategy. Find out more about DeepRiverMedia by going to www.deeprivermedia.net.

Getting Down to Business Classes Coming Up

Iowans for Social & Economic Development (ISED) and others are once again offering their 6-week business planning class for those who want to start or expand their own small business. You will learn to create a business plan, create effective marketing strategies, understand legalities, tax code and more! Weekly classes begin February 16th and continue through April 6th. You must pre-register and classes fill up fast! Call 515.283.0940 for more information.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to targeted small business owner Emily Starr, a former fourth-grade teacher and president and founder of StarrMatica Learning Systems LLC. Her “entrepreneur story” was recently featured on the business news Web site, www.businessrecord.com.

Today the elementary chalkboard must make room for a new type of technology in which a traditional whiteboard becomes interactive. The giant white “touch board” of sorts, displays programs and lessons projected from a computer. Students and teachers then use their hands to manipulate the different pieces on the screen. Emily’s teacher-designed interactive Adobe Flash programs for the boards are fast becoming the savior for teachers hoping to effectively use the technology in the classroom. By subscribing to her Web site teachers gain access to more than 570 interactive lessons, games and activities that can help teach skills across 43 topic areas for students in third to sixth grade.

StarrMatica received a TSB loan which helped her launch the Clinton, IA-based business.

