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# The MBE Monitor

Integrity. Accountability. Opportunity.

*A Publication of the Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Minority Business Enterprise  
The Official Certification Agency for the State of Maryland*

## A Message From The Governor

Small, minority- and women-owned businesses are the backbone of our State. In fact, nearly 90% of our workforce is employed by small businesses. Regardless of the economic climate, Maryland relies on our small business community to create jobs and fuel innovation. Lt. Governor Brown and I fully understand that these entrepreneurs are a driving force in our State's economic recovery. Of course, navigating the procurement process takes a unique set of skills and that is why we are proud to be part of a new initiative called MBE University.

MBE University is a collaborative effort between the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, the Department of Business and Economic Development, the Department of General Services, the Governor's Grants Office and the Department of Transportation. It has been designed to help small, minority- or women-owned businesses learn how to do business as a contractor/vendor to the State of Maryland. Nearly 300 people attended the kick-off event held in Prince George's County in December. The featured workshops covered topics such as bid and proposal submission requirements, federal contracting and ways to access capital. The Office of Minority Business Enterprise conducted workshops on how to become certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) as well as ways to expand certification for firms that are already certified.

I am pleased that private sector partners joined us for this event. Representatives from Verizon and Pepco held matchmaking sessions with individual participants and conducted business development workshops for minority firms interested in learning how to do business with them.

Our Minority Business Enterprise Program is the oldest in the country and our MBE certification program is the national gold standard. We currently have more than 4,600 certified MBEs spanning every industry imaginable that are ready to meet minority participation goals on both public and private sector contracts.

In 2010, MBE University will travel to four additional regions of the State, giving more business owners access to this great opportunity. Until it reaches a town near you, I wish you prosperity and thank you for your contributions to our great State.

Sincerely,

Martin O'Malley  
Governor



*Governor O'Malley addressed an audience of more than 300 business owners during the launch of MBE University in Prince George's County in December.*

## New PNW Cap for State's MBE Program

The Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) recently announced that the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program has increased the Personal Net Worth (PNW) cap applied to the MBE certification program from \$1,500,000 to \$1,504,585. One of several new laws passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2009, the goal of Senate Bill 489/House Bill 471 is to ensure that the requirements for certification are aligned with the current economy by adjusting the PNW cap annually.

"The new cap will apply to all certification decisions rendered during 2010," stated OMBE Director Zenita Wickham Hurley. "As the official certification agency for the State, OMBE is responsible for calculating the annual cap based on the Consumer Price Index."

Senate Bill 489 was sponsored by Senators Catherine Pugh, Ulysses Currie, David Harrington, Richard Madaleno, Nathaniel McFadden, C. Anthony Muse, Douglas Peters, Jamie Raskin, Nathaniel Exum, Michael Lenett, and Joan Carter Conway. House Bill 471 was sponsored by Delegates Joseline Penamelnik, Barbara Robinson, Jay Walker,

Michael Weir, Ben Barnes, Aisha Braveboy, Jolene Ivey, Gerron Levi, Veronica Turner, Kris Valderrama, Joanne Benson, John Donoghue, James Hubbard, Sue Kullen, Karen Montgomery, Dan Morhaim, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Nathaniel Oaks, Kirill Reznik, and Shawn Tarrant.

The MBE Program's PNW cap has been \$1,500,000 since 2004. The PNW cap for the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program is not affected. The DBE cap on personal net worth remains \$750,000.

Firms meeting the standards set forth in State and federal law are eligible for MBE and/or DBE certification. The certification process ensures that only bona fide disadvantaged or minority-owned firms receive the MBE/DBE designation in support of the State's minority business inclusion efforts. For more information, contact the Office of Minority Business Enterprise at 410-865-1269 or learn more online by visiting the Minority/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise tab at [www.mdot.maryland.gov](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov).



## Wells Named Administrator of MTA

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is pleased to welcome **Ralign T. Wells** to the position of Administrator.

A 20-year veteran whose career began as a part-time bus operator, Mr. Wells previously served as MTA's Deputy Administrator for Operations where he was responsible for the day-to-day operation of bus and rail services within the Baltimore region and commuter bus and rail services into Washington, D.C.

Mr. Wells is credited with developing innovative policies that reduced MTA's overtime expenditures by more than 26 percent while providing a 2.5 percent increase in services. With two decades of experience in virtually every major area of transit operations at MTA, Wells is an innovative leader who understands the value of customer service.



## Bartlett Named Deputy Secretary of MDOT

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is pleased to welcome **Harold M. Bartlett** as its new Deputy Secretary.

Former Deputy Executive Secretary of the Maryland Transportation Authority, Mr. Bartlett is a recognized leader in the transportation sector. In the role of Deputy Secretary, Mr. Bartlett will serve as Chief Operating Officer and oversee the Maryland Transportation Authority and the five modal agencies that include the Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland Port Administration, Maryland Aviation Administration, Motor Vehicle Administration and State Highway Administration. His responsibilities include oversight of MDOT's MBE/DBE certification and compliance programs.



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to OMBE's Director  
**Zenita Wickham Hurley**,  
recipient of the 2009  
**Outstanding Leadership & Commitment to  
the Minority Business Community Award**  
presented by the  
Maryland Black Caucus Foundation.

OMBE's staff members conduct a free Application Assistance Workshops on the first Tuesday of every month. To learn more and register online, visit [http://www.mdot.state.md.us/MBE\\_Program/Index.html](http://www.mdot.state.md.us/MBE_Program/Index.html).



## Marketing Tip: Perfecting the Elevator Speech

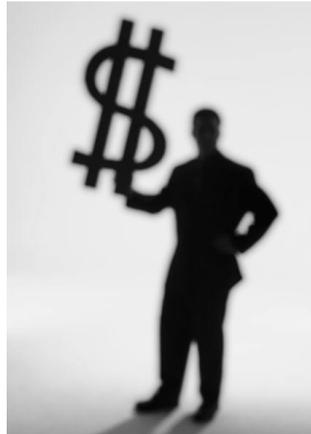
**D**o you have an elevator speech? Business people must be able to speak about their business to others clearly and with passion. You also must be able to do it succinctly. The elevator speech – so named because it is brief – is a critical communication tool that too many professionals disregard. Here are a few things to keep in mind when creating or improving your elevator speech.

You have a small amount of time to make a big impression, so choose your words carefully. Avoid industry jargon, focus on your core products/services and stay away from too many details. Use action words (ending in “ing”) that convey energy and excitement.

Practice makes perfect, so make the time to practice. Some experts suggest rehearsing in front of a mirror while others recommend practicing in the car. Either place is fine. Most of us are not accomplished public speakers and practicing builds confidence; something your listeners will definitely notice.

Your company is constantly changing and your elevator speech should too. You don’t get more time to add new information, so you’ll have to determine what needs to come out in order to keep your elevator speech tight and on point.

## Discount Loans Available to MBEs Only



**T**apping resources designated specifically for certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) is one strategy that offers a measureable pay off in a tough economy. Just ask Jacqueline Manzini, owner of Amtrac Railroad Contractors headquartered in Hagerstown. She saved \$8,000 by borrowing money through the Maryland Linked Deposit Program.

It all started when her loan officer at Hagerstown Trust told her about a unique new lending program administered through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Available to MDOT certified MBE’s exclusively, it provides firms with a 2% discount on commercial loans and lines of credit with participating banks.

“We are looking at every possible way to cut expenses,” commented Ms. Manzini. “We’ll save \$8,000 by participating in the Linked Deposit Program. That makes it the highlight of a very tough year.”

Borrowers must be certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation as an MBE and the purpose of the loan must be for a project or activity located in Maryland. The maximum loan amount for any borrower is \$1 million.

After more than 20 years in business, Manzini says 2009 was her company’s hardest economic year ever. “This was a real ‘value added’ component of my MBE certification and I will be coming back to the Linked Deposit Program for any equipment I buy in 2010.”

There are currently three banks participating in the Linked Deposit Program. Interested applicants may begin the process by applying with DHCD online at [www.neighborhoodrevitalization.org](http://www.neighborhoodrevitalization.org) or contacting Dawn Medley at 410-514-7237.

## MBE Success Story: Road Safety, LLC

**R**oad Safety, LLC has been in business since 2001. Owner Lisa Lane applied for and received MBE/DBE certification that same year. Like any new business owner, she had some early struggles and was totally immersed in filling multiple roles. In fact, she spent many nights sleeping on a sofa in the office and had to give up lots of time with her family.

“Starting your own business is hard,” Ms. Lane said. “I had to learn how to do many new things and take some big risks. My certification was really valuable because it helped me get my first customer.”

According to Ms. Lane, building relationships has been a critical factor in her company’s success. “I had to learn where to find prospective customers, but that information is out there if you are willing to figure out the process,” she said.

Today, 65% - 75% of Road Safety’s workload is performed as an MBE. Despite a tough economy, Lane is experiencing increased sales and is even thinking about expanding into some new areas.

“I want to let women know that the opportunity for success and independence in our State through the MBE Program is so very possible with commitment and desire. Most rewarding to me is the personal confidence I have gained while growing the company,” Ms. Lane concluded.





Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Anthony G. Brown  
Lt. Governor



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## Procurement Opportunities

Take advantage of State and local government contracting opportunities by registering with eMaryland Marketplace at <http://www.emarylandmarketplace.com>. The free registration provides a means for businesses to receive e-mail notification of upcoming contracting opportunities in their specified areas of interest and expertise. For registration requirements, visit [www.emarylandmarketplace.com](http://www.emarylandmarketplace.com) to join Maryland's gateway to bidding opportunities for commodity, construction, architect and engineering, facility maintenance, human services, information technology and related services. Listed below are a few upcoming opportunities.

**R13SO264255** - Preparation of Maryland State-Owned Facility Asbestos Management Plan. The Contractor shall furnish all labor, transportation, materials, equipment, supervision, and services necessary for performing asbestos inspection, survey and updating the Asbestos Management Plan for Morgan State University (MSU) located at 1700 East Cold Spring lane, Baltimore, MD 21251. To be considered for this project the contractor must possess the necessary EPA accreditation required under EPA Standard 40 CFR 763, Sub Part E, Asbestos Hazard Emergency

Response Act (AHERA) and OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926.1101 Inspection Protocol. MBE goal: 30%.

**001IT817933** - Patient Environmental Improvements at Eastern Shore Hospital Center. Work consists of modifying building elements in patient areas to decrease potential ligature points and the risk of patient self-injury. Work includes replacing door hardware, replacing seclusion-room doors, modifying or replacing bathroom and toilet room fixtures, installing new bathroom electrical outlets for replacement lavatories,

related plumbing and finish work. MBE goal: 25%

**MNPSO264175** - Replacement of Tennis Court Lighting at Cabin John Regional park. Work includes the removal and disposal of the existing lights and poles; furnishing and installation of a new tennis court lighting system including poles, fixtures, pull boxes, direct burial conduit, wiring, control links and metering. The project also includes restoration of the disturbed areas (seeding, asphalt and/or concrete patching). MBE goal: 13%

## Certified Comments

The Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) is committed to ensuring that small, minority and women-owned firms have the opportunity to participate fully and fairly in public contracting. We welcome your comments. Here's what a few of our certified firms have to say about the certification process:

*"The Application process was very fluid and streamlined – an easy step-by-step process overall. The responsiveness of the MBE Office, as well as my Agent (Kai-Feng Huang) was phenomenal."*

*"I was highly impressed with my Agent (Sharon Lewis). She was extremely professional, knowledgeable and really understood the complexities of my business. She also explained the process of certification very well to me. She is an asset to the organization."*

*"The Agent I worked with (LaVerl Hendrix) was extremely helpful in ensuring I was fully aware of the process. She was attentive, responsive and very knowledgeable of all components of the program."*



To share your experiences, please contact us at:  
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