

ROCHESTER AREA

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

FEBRUARY 25, 2015

Chamber Focuses on Diversity in Business

In an effort to provide small businesses and minority, women and veteran-owned enterprises in SE Minnesota better access to opportunities in the region's economy, the [Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce](#) has launched a program called the [Supplier Diversity Initiative](#), or SDI. A collaboration with the [City of Rochester](#), [Mayo Clinic](#) and [Rochester Area Economic Development, Inc.](#) (RAEDI), the program is designed to provide education and networking opportunities to these businesses, and to foster relationships between these suppliers and buyers in larger organizations.

The SDI will help promote inclusion of diverse businesses in SE Minnesota's growing economy. Chamber president Rob Miller commented, "Since 2000, Rochester's minority communities have grown by more than half. At the same time, the number of women-owned businesses and businesses started by military veterans has steadily increased. In my opinion, the strength and stability of a community can be measured by the extent to which diverse groups, such as these, are included in its economy."

On April 1 at 2:00 p.m., the SDI will kick-off its program at the Rochester Public Library Auditorium. This inaugural meeting will set the tone of a series of meetings to follow, which are designed to:

- Educate businesses about the benefits of becoming certified as minority, women and veteran-owned enterprises;
- Provide an overview of the certification process; and
- Connect these businesses with resources to assist them in becoming certified.

Businesses that obtain these certifications will position themselves to compete for contracts set aside for disadvantaged businesses through federal, state and local governments. Certified businesses are also in demand by corporations that are seeking to diversify their supplier base.

Business owners interested in finding out more about becoming certified should register for this series of meetings through the "Events Calendar" on the Chamber's website. Following the April 1 orientation meeting, meetings to address specific issues related to certification of minority, women, veteran and small businesses will be held on April 29, May 6, May 13 and May 20, 2015, respectively.

More information on the Chamber's Diversity in Business efforts can be found at www.rochestermnchamber.com/pages/Diversity.

About the Chamber

The Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization representing more than 1,400 businesses throughout SE Minnesota. The Chamber provides networking, marketing, public advocacy and educational opportunities to its membership, and works to represent the business community on economic and governmental issues. The Chamber's mission is "to lead, inform, advocate and advance business interests for members, and to promote a healthy community and a growing economy."

Inquiries

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