

For Immediate Release

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November 30, 2012

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**Champions of Supplier Diversity and Small Business
Lauded at
Cal Asian Chamber's "2nd Annual State of Small
Business" forum
Held at Fort Mason, San Francisco**

***Forum focused on opportunities for small and disadvantaged
businesses in California's "Next Economy"***

SACRAMENTO – The California Asian (CalAsian) Pacific Chamber of Commerce held its Second Annual State of Small Business event this past Wednesday at Fort Mason, San Francisco. With standing room only, over 180 participants were registered to hear from some of the state's top economic and political leaders on how to cope with the challenges of the current economy and how to seize opportunities in California's "Next Economy."

"I thought one of the most powerful dynamics that the panel offered was the combination of 'big picture forecasting' with pragmatic thoughts for specific actions that the small business owners could take to stay focused on opportunities. We gave them a picture of both the forest and the trees," said Small Business Revolution's President/CEO and former CA State Small Business Advocate, Marty Keller whom moderated a panel discussion at the forum.

The event also featured newly elected Assemblyman Rob Bonta of the 16th Assembly District. Bonta is the first ever Filipino-American elected to the California State Legislature. A husband and father of three, Bonta is currently the Vice Mayor of the City of Alameda and an Alameda County Transportation Commissioner. At the event, Bonta addressed some of the ideas he had to foster economic development, exercise fiscal responsibility, and improve business opportunities for California's families.

The CalAsian chamber, recognizing that one of the state's greatest assets is its entrepreneurs and small business owners; also presented a special award to Sheena Chang of Vantec Thermal Technologies out of Fremont. Ms. Chang is a proven innovator, small business advocate and leader in the Asian Pacific Islander business community and was duly recognized with an award from the chamber for her outstanding volunteer and community efforts. The award was presented by newly

appointed Chairman of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, Assemblyman Paul Fong.

The forum highlighted several key statistics such as the fact that in the Asian/Pacific Islander American community alone, there are nearly 600,000 entrepreneurs and small businesses. A vast majority of these small businesses are family-owned and operated. The strongest corporations and businesses not only reflect the diversity of their customers; they also actively embrace diversity as a business imperative. Asian Americans now represent more than 16% of the total state population, yet the number of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in the senior-most ranks of corporations and educational institutions that do business in our state is often in single digits.

Other noted speakers included: Board of Equalization Member, Betty Yee; Mike Dorsey, Managing Partner at the Westly Group; Bill Imada, IW Group – Chairman and Chief Collaboration Officer; Jim Butler, California Department of General Services – Deputy Director; Heidi Pickman, Communications Director with the California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity; and Banking Executives Elaine Genevro and Sandi Kimoto Eason with Union Bank.

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