

## Maryland “The Model”, Reception for Liberia’s Candidate

1. One Stop Certification Update: As the SBA begins the rulemaking process it is insisting that the new law applies to 8(a) certification only. This means that states, cities, schools and other entities that receive federal money must accept 8(a) certification into their programs. This does not include SDB, Small Disadvantaged Business, certification. We will have to advocate for another amendment during the 109th Congress to include SDB certification into the program. However, progressive states and cities, such as Maryland are now engaging the SBA and will eventually accept SDB certification as the process into their Minority Business programs. One Stop Certification must become a reality and we will press on continuously.

2. Maryland “The Model”: Many of you have inquired about the dynamic steps being taken by Governor Robert Ehrlich, Lt. Gov. Michael Steele and Special Secretary Sharon Pinder, towards Minority Business Enterprise Reform. The official Commission Report can be downloaded from their website: [www.mdminoritybusiness.com](http://www.mdminoritybusiness.com) . We encourage all states to emulate what the people in “money making” Maryland are doing. It is the National Model.

3. Kudos in Oklahoma: We want to congratulate the Oklahoma Black Chamber of Commerce for its successful kick off which included the Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry, 3 TV crews, 2 newspapers and various chambers from within the state. The Sooner State is now organized and we expect great things to come. We are grateful to Moses Iskariari and Sue Brown for their hard work in making this association a reality. Visit their website at [www.oklahomabcc.org](http://www.oklahomabcc.org) .

4. End to Federal Prison Industries Abuse: At last, the end has come to a program known as the Federal Prison Industries requirement. This was a requirement for federal agencies to purchase products from Federal Prison Industries as a sole source. FPI would use virtual slave or indentured labor from prison inmates. They would also act as a “pass through” by buying products from private firms marking them up and selling them to federal agencies with no competition. Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI) was our champion in this fight. He estimates that this will open up more than \$500 million per year in federal procurement for small businesses. This long fight was a very curious one as the NBCC would sometimes have to debate certain members of the Congressional Black Caucus about this virtual slavery of Black inmates. It took a while to fully explain the ills of this.

5. Reception for Liberia's Candidate: There will be a reception for the Honorable Dr. Joseph M. Woah-Tee, Sr. who is running for the Presidency of Liberia on January 16, 2005. This reception will be held in Virginia right outside of Washington, DC. Those wanting more information can call Ron Sykes at 703-753-0102 or [rgsentinc@aol.com](mailto:rgsentinc@aol.com) . Harry C. Alford, President and CEO of the NBCC will be in attendance. A journalist for Voice of America magazine will also be in attendance.

6. Unity Inaugural Ball: January 20th will be a federal holiday for metropolitan Washington, DC and there will be many events in honor of the inaugural celebration. One unique ball will be the 2005 Unity Gala which, believe it or not, is a collaboration of Democrats as well as Republicans. Entertainment will feature The Temptations Review with Dennis Edwards. Tickets can be purchased via Ticket Master at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) . Perhaps this will be the start of a fresh productive trend.

7. Chattanooga Signs Up: We failed to include Chattanooga as a venue for our Building Wealth Tour in the last eBLAST. The Chattanooga African American Chamber of Commerce will host a Building Wealth Seminar on April 21, 2005. This chamber is also producing 4 participants for our Kenya Trade Mission, February 5 – 12 (here).

8. Chamber Memberships: We are now accepting new members as well as renewals (here).

To the 100,000 businesses that read this eBLAST, we are;

THE NATIONAL BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.