

SBA Anoints Country's First Advocate in Faith Based Lending

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It's no doubt that today's world revolves around finance. As everyday expenses continue to rise, so does the cost of running a successful business- and often overlooked, these hardships also remain true for faith-based entities. However, despite the odds of difficulty, there is help for today's business owners, entrepreneurs and faith-based entities.

AmPac TriState Certified Development Company, a non-profit lender, licensed in 2007, is the first faith-based certified lender for the U.S. Small Business Administration in the country. Uniquely it is the core mission of AmPac, to provide SBA loans to new and growing businesses who seek fixed rate, long-term financing with below market rates.

In a collaborative spirit, the U.S. Small Business Administration, Santa Ana District Office and AmPac Tri State CDC are teaming up to host's SBA's First Annual Tri-County Faith-Based Small Business Summit, Thursday, October 9th, 2008 at the Ontario Convention Center. This history making event is set to target three counties of the Inland Empire: San Bernardino, Orange and Riverside Counties, in an effort to carry out

President George Bush's order to reach faith-based and underserved communities with the resources available for small businesses. This educational effort will also provide information for faith-based entities like churches and other nonprofit organizations seeking to provide a variety of services to the community.

As an informative platform, this summit is in part designed to bring together nonprofit and for profit businesses to provide them with access to capital for small businesses. "No longer will this be the best kept secret," said Hilda Kennedy, Executive Director of AmPac.

"Businesses and prospective businesses can access critical resources through this federal agency to maximize growth," said Kennedy. "We wanted to bring faith-based entities and underserved communities together," she adds.

SBA's Office of Advocacy reported that in 2007, California had an estimated 3,675,700 small businesses.

Among the topics of discussion during the summit for nonprofit organizations and for profit businesses are: The ABCs of Starting a Business, Access to Funds for Growing Your Non-Profit and for Growing Your Business, Surviving & Thriving During an Economic Downturn... Where Faith &

Businesses Meet; Funding for Capital Expansion for Churches, Non-Profit Advertising, and How to Develop Partnerships.

The keynote speaker for the summit will be Dr. Jeffrey Decker, a Professor at Biola University's School of Organization and Leadership. During the summit, Dr. Decker will be discussing Business Ethics and its impact on growing effective Business Leaders.

His teaching career includes that of professor and director of the Executive Management an MBA programs at the Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management. As a part of his outstanding achievements, Dr. Decker received the Harry S. Nerhood award for teaching excellence at Whittier College in 1997.

AmPac is comprised of a unique board of members and financing professionals who are experienced in "turning around companies and investing new ideas and cutting edge innovation." In addition to its existing staff, AmPac has established a Pastor's Advisory Committee that meets with the staff and board to assist AmPac in



2005. As a key player in the implementation of its structure, Kennedy is one of the founders of AmPac along with Larry Polhill, and William Loewenstein. She graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in Psychology, and had completed a post-graduate work in public policy and public affairs with the Coro Foundation in New York. Prior to her joining the AmPac organization, Kennedy spent 12 years employed by the City of Inglewood as the Chief of Staff for the Mayor and Director of Economic Development.

To date AmPac has assisted over 50 businesses with a total of \$8 million in funds. "We're committed to walking hand in hand with our clients, and going the distance. We believe people should have a second chance and dreams are possible with hard work," said Kennedy.

"Small businesses are the heart of the California's economy. Small businesses create most of the nation's net new jobs, and bring dynamic services, and products to the market place. New business creation is key to a state's ability to increase its gross state product, state personal income, and total state employment," said SBA in 2007.

Through the unanimous efforts of AmPac TriState CDC, in partnership with the SBA, The City of Ontario, and The Inland Empire Women's Business Center, and a host of other organizations, this summit will leave a lasting impression on today's small and for-profit businesses and faith-based entities. And as a catalyst for positive change, this summit will also encourage business growth and provide tools to assist businesses and faith based entities to promote strong local economies.

Kennedy states that she and the AmPac organization are eager to host this year's summit. She also adds that they look forward to expanding their efforts in the future into the Los Angeles community as well. ■

addressing faith-based community needs and issues.

"The Pastor's Advisory Committee is the planning power behind this year's summit," said Kennedy.

AmPac is committed to helping independently owned, for-profit businesses, both start-ups and existing businesses. Some of the many benefits of AmPac's lending programs are lower down payments, fixed interest rates, longer loan terms.

Kennedy shared an example of the significant AmPac has had on some of its

clients. She recalls a couple approaching their 25th year in business sought to purchase their building after having had been displaced four times over the last ten years. Kennedy said that the challenge of the loan included overcoming past criminal records and bankruptcy. Though through diligence and professionalism and consistent prayer she says, AmPac worked with the borrower, the SBA and the bank, and was able to provide to SBA 504 loan for the couple totaling almost \$400,000 in San Bernardino County.

As the Executive Director, Kennedy has been involved with AmPac since its creation in