PATERNON PUSHES NY STATE MWBE AGENDA

(Albany, NY April 25, 2007)
Taking an important step in fulfilling a campaign pledge to usher in a new era of accountability in the area of state government utilization of Minority and Women Owned Businesses, Lt. Governor David Paterson convened a meeting of executives from the state’s major agencies and authorities. This historic gathering of state decision makers was part of a mandate issued in an Executive Order signed by Governor Eliot Spitzer on February 18th which, among other things, establishes an Executive Leadership Council to examine state procurement practices and increase the utilization of qualified MWBE’s.

MWBE MATTERS
Recently appointed State MWBE Development Executive Director Michael Jones-Bey looks on as Lt. Governor David Paterson explains the Spitzer Administration’s commitment to MWBE’s.

Lt. Governor Paterson, who is leading the state’s efforts to improve its MWBE program told Executive Leadership Council members that, "Last year the state spent over $11 billion in discretionary expenditures and MWBEs only received 3% of state contracts. This administration will reverse the negative inertia of the past 12 years and push to build the capacity of MWBE firms and increase the utilization of qualified MWBEs."

The first quarterly meeting of the Executive Leadership Council was attended by top state officials including, Budget Director Paul Francis, State Comptroller Tom Dinapoli, OGS Commissioner John Egan, DOT Commissioner Astrid Glynn, Thruway Authority CEO Michael Fleisher, and MTA CEO Eliot Sander.
VISION FOR NEW ERA OF MWBE OPPORTUNITIES

Executive Director Michael Jones-Bey explains new quarterly report cards that will measure state agencies' performance for MWBE utilization.

After laying out the vision for the new MWBE initiative, MWBE Development Executive Director Michael Jones-Bey explained the purpose of the Executive Leadership Council saying that, "This will be a forum to discuss best practices for implementation of procurement policies. It is also a means to hold agency executives accountable for compliance with state MWBE procurement laws. In the past there had been a culture of noncompliance because the previous administration made it clear that MWBE procurement did not matter. As you all heard from Lt. Governor Paterson today, this administration will make it a priority."

Jones-Bey concluded his presentation with an explanation of a new quarterly report card that will be issued to measure agencies' performance for MWBE utilization. He also announced a retreat that will be held to train agency procurement officials on best practices for MWBE program implementation.

For many in attendance the highlight of the meeting was where agency executives made their presentations. Each executive delivered a PowerPoint presentation reporting their agency's previous quarterly utilization of MWBEs for expenditures in the areas of construction, construction consulting, commodities, and services. This was followed by a presentation of their MWBE procurement goals for next quarter as well as their strategic plan to achieve their goals. This unprecedented public airing of MWBE agency performance was followed by a general group discussion of ways to tackle some of the common problems encountered by agency executives.

FOCUS ON MWBE

Members of the Executive Leadership Council discuss goals of new Spitzer Paterson MWBE initiatives.

After the meeting, MWBE advocate and CEO of the minority owned firm Spectrum Personal Communications Corp., Mark O'Luck summed up his impressions by saying, "If I had not come up to Albany to see this meeting for myself, I would not have believed it. The sight of New York's most powerful executives gathered together to discuss how we can finally move towards getting our fair share of business was breathtaking. If I had any doubts before this meeting, they were shattered today. In the past we have only received lip service. We now have a framework for accountability and results. I walked away from this meeting with the sense that Spitzer, Paterson and Jones-Bey are definitely serious about creating opportunities for our businesses."
PROFITABLE DISCUSSION
New York State agency and authority executives discuss best practices for MWBE procurement.