

## Connecting ... and Succeeding

### Small Business Day Offers Tools, Resources

**C**ould your small business operate more efficiently? Do you face direct or indirect challenges from global competitors? Would your company benefit from doing business with major corporations or government entities? Do legislative issues – taxes, health care mandates and more – impact your operations? Can networking assist your efforts?

If the answers to all of these questions are no, congratulations. If a yes or two or four can be found, the Indiana Chamber is offering help through its annual Small Business Day at the Statehouse program. The January 20 event takes place at the Westin Hotel and the Statehouse in downtown Indianapolis.

Connections: Your Link to Business Success is the theme for the 2004 Small Business Day event sponsored by the Chamber's Indiana Small Business Council. Today's complex world makes it difficult to operate in a vacuum. Even the best entrepreneurs and leaders require assistance to reach their business goals.

Among the day's featured activities:

- Demonstration of a Tooling Net program that Purdue University hopes to have in place by the spring of this year. The Internet-based effort will match companies and potential suppliers, as well as assist manufacturers with the production process.

"Companies looking for a particular part, product or device can enter what they need into the program," explains Reggie Henderson, Chamber director of small business and economic development. "Suppliers can open up the description, see a CAD drawing of the product and determine if they have, or could make, what the customer is looking for. Searches – by materials, price points, algorithmic analysis, desired product life and other methods – make this a valuable tool."

- A session on decreasing costs in the face of international competition will be facilitated by Barnes & Thornburg and Crowe Chizek. Consortiums for bulk purchases, working with logistics consultants to improve delivery and providing custom products and services will among the initiatives discussed.

Henderson categorizes it as, "Taking American ingenuity and expertise, and tweaking it to be more cost productive to outpace and outperform global competitors. Customer service and its importance will also be a part of the discussion."

- Chamber President Kevin Brinegar will discuss small business issues that are being debated by the Indiana General Assembly. The opportunity to visit with legislators and attend committee hearings will provide insight and input on a process that does dramatically affect all Indiana companies.

A number of legislators will also be in attendance at the luncheon event. Selected senators and representatives will be honored with Small Business Champion awards for their efforts on behalf of the small business community.

- Find out how your company can work with Eli Lilly, Subaru, Raytheon, the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane and others. Procurement directors and buyers from these major purchasers will discuss requirements and strategies to help make those business connections.

Small businesses will learn about required certifications, production cycles, how to relate prior experience in a particular industry and the all-important what not to do in presenting an application.

- The day ends with a networking reception featuring Toyota as corporate host. Talk one-on-one with the people you have heard from throughout the day and share information with fellow small business owners and managers. A little time today could result in new business opportunities tomorrow.

Although questions and feedback will be welcome throughout the day, an important part of the event is a 45-minute session strictly devoted to small business owners discussing the issues – describing the business threats and analyzing the opportunities available.

"We've put together a strong education program, based on current issues, with a new business development component," Henderson summarizes. "The ability to learn about critical legislative issues and interact with legislators helps round out the event. It's important for small businesses to let their voices be heard."

Small Business Day takes place from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the networking reception following. An investment of \$75 includes all activities, or two people can register together for a total of \$100.

#### INFORMATION LINK

**Resources:** To learn more about Small Business Day at the Statehouse, contact Henderson at (317) 264-6892

To register, visit [www.indianachamber.com](http://www.indianachamber.com) and click on the Small Business Day link or contact Libby Schenk at (317) 264-6894