



Native American Business Alliance Celebrates 10th Anniversary at Annual National Business Conference Focused on “Strategic Growth & Planning for Future Generations.”

The Native American Business Alliance (NABA) celebrated its 10th Anniversary during its 5th Annual National Business Conference held at Walt Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida, April 17-19.

Detroit, MI ([PRWeb](#)) May 13, 2005 -- The Native American Business Alliance (NABA) celebrated its 10th Anniversary during its 5th Annual National Business Conference focusing on “Strategic Growth & Planning for Future Generations,” held at Walt Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort & Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, April 17-19, sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company and Dakkota Integrated Systems LLC (a Native American Owned Company).

“NABA Annual Conferences offer corporate and general members the unmatched networking opportunity to conduct business face-to-face, and our 10-year milestone provides a platform to reflect on past achievements while laying groundwork for the next decade of growth,” said NABA National Executive Director Jackie Gant, a graduate of Harvard University and an enrolled member of the Oneida Nation of the Thames.

NABA was founded in 1995 by four Native American Business Owners -- Tom “Running Bear” Smith (Western Cherokee), President of Tom Smith Industries; Lee Pepion (Blackfoot), President of The Blackfoot Company; Lloyd Milby (Cherokee), President of L.W. Milby Exhibit Services; and Ken Barnes (Mohawk), President of Upper Mohawk, Inc. Their goals remains the same – to provide independently owned and tribal-based Native American businesses in the United States and Canada with the opportunity to develop relationships with purchasing representatives from top and Fortune 500 companies. In turn, NABA also provides corporations with opportunities to understand and enjoy Native American traditions through culturally-enriching conference and networking events. NABA currently has 300 plus members and works from a database filled with 10,000 Native Owned Businesses registered as Suppliers in working with its Corporate Members.

The April 2005 conference featured a “Long Table” one-on-one networking session, bringing together Corporate Purchasing Representatives and Native American Owned Businesses where each had the distinct opportunity to exchange services/products and needs. Another special programming event featured “Talking Circles,” breakout groups that focused on topics ranging from business issues to cultural themes, and a “Plenary” session featuring panelists such as Tribal Chairman Ken W. Davis of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians; Thomas K. Brown, Senior Vice President of Global Purchasing at Ford Motor Company; and Joseph Mudd, Senior Manager of Minority & Women Business Development at Target Corporation. The panelists shared with the audience their continued commitment to do business with Native American Owned Businesses and NABA and the benefits of partnering with a Native American organization such as NABA. Governmental Agency Representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration, Native American Business Center, General Services Administration, Minority Business Development Agency, Canadian Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council and Aboriginal International Business Development, International Trade participated in this years conference with the focus of bringing more Native Business across the border and vice versa.



Aside from Coca Cola and Dakkota sponsorship, additional Conference Event Sponsors include: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Visteon Corporation, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, UPS, Inc., General Motors Corporation, Walt Disney World, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, NA, Ford Motor Company, American Express, Standard Federal Bank, General Mills Corporation, ITT Industries, Procter & Gamble Company, IBM Corporation, La-Z-Boy Corporation, American Indian Report and Minority Business News Magazine, Target Corporation and Corporate Express. Top Native American Owned Businesses provided conference sponsorships Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Company, Systrand Manufacturing Corporation, Tom Smith Industries, Pinnacle Molded Plastics Corporation, Four Claws Printing, The Ojibway Group and Upper Mohawk, Inc.

The closing evening began with cultural speaker "Litefoot," star of "Indian in a Cupboard," 2004 Native American Hip Hop Artist of the Year and founder of 2005-2006 Reach The Rez Tour Native American, and included Traditional Native Dancers who got the crowd dancing. The Gala Dinner featured Keynote Speaker Terry Braun (Seneca), Technology Solutions Executive at IBM Global Services, and a 10 year anniversary presentation which highlighted the founding members and special moments over the past years.

During the Gala and 10 Year Anniversary Celebration Dinner, awards were presented to UPS, Inc. (Corporation of the Year), Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Company (Native American Business of the Year), Harvard Resource Group (New Member of the Year), Minority Business News Magazine, U.S.A. (Spirit Award), and Stormy Hicks, President of ITT Industries, Fluid Handling System was presented with the Native American Advocate of the Year Award. A special recognition award was presented to Robert Kufta (recently retired from General Motors Corporation) for his deep commitment to NABA and in helping to develop relationships between NABA and Corporate America.

NABA's Corporate Members, who provide business (procurement) opportunities to Native American businesses include American Express, The Coca-Cola Company, Comerica Bank, DaimlerChrysler Corporation, Dakkota Integrated Systems, Delta Airlines, Denny's Restaurants, First Energy, Ford Motor Company, General Mills Corporation, General Motors Corporation, IBM, La-Z-Boy Corporation, Kellogg Company, Procter & Gamble Company, Standard Federal Bank, Sumaria Systems, Inc., Takata, Target, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, UPS, Inc., Eastman Kodak, Systrand Manufacturing, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Kellogg Company, Minority Business News Magazine, Wal-Mart, The Walt Disney Company, National City Bank, Durr Automotive, Federal-Mogul Corporation and ITT Industries. Tribal Members who seek business opportunities on their reservations and/or looking to partner with corporations are Oneida Nation of the Thames, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Walpole Island First Nation, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Lac Vieux Desert Tribe, and Little River Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians.

For more information on the conference or how to become a member of the Native American Business Alliance Fund, please visit the NABA website at <http://www.native-american-bus.org>

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