

Oakland Reception for RA Elizabeth Echols

Small Business Speakers Cautiously Optimistic About 2011

In the post-work hours of December 9 at Scott's Seafood Restaurant in Oakland, DD Mark Quinn served as emcee for "Small Business Agenda for 2011 - Getting Back to Work" with more than 80 in attendance.

The program served as an opportunity to hear small business leaders discuss their accomplishments in 2010 and give their predictions for 2011. It also provided attendees a chance to meet and greet RA Elizabeth Echols, who's been on a heavy travel schedule since her appointment to Region IX last August.

Speakers included Scott Hauge, president of Small Business California; Toni Symonds, chief consultant to the California legislature on jobs, economic development and the economy; Kurt Chilcott, CEO, CDC Small Business Finance; Roxann Burns, senior VP with Heritage Bank; Jacob Singer, CEO, OBDC Small Business Finance; Kristin Johnson, director of the Northern California SBDC; and Julie Abrams, CEO of Women's Initiative.

Elizabeth Echols
 Regional Administrator

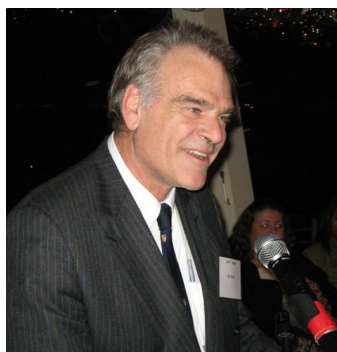


"Since late September when President Obama signed the Jobs Bill, SBA has provided over \$800 million in small business lending in California.

"A focus on small business is the way we're going to pull ourselves out of the recession and I thank all of you for your work every day helping small businesses succeed.

"My focus in 2011 and beyond will be on underserved markets, youth entrepreneurship and 'Green' businesses. There are huge opportunities for SBA assistance in these areas."

Small Business Leaders Talk About Accomplishments, Predictions



Scott Hauge
 Small Business California

"Small businesses are struggling, hanging on by their fingernails, and I don't see this changing very much in 2011. Nonetheless, I'm beginning to see some optimism in the small business community.

"Sometime next year, I'd like to see a statewide lenders' conference with a focus on how we can get funding to small businesses."



Jacob Singer (left)
 OBDC Small Business Finance

"For us, this is a good time to be a microlender. We're creating 500 jobs a year with microlending. Oakland has some real challenges but I'm optimistic about the city's economy.

"The overall structural program with microlending could be improved by SBA. It's hard to maintain momentum year-to-year when future funding for your organization is uncertain."

Julie Abrams (right)
 Women's Initiative

"Training is so important. We've enjoyed significant results with 70 percent of our graduates still in business five years after they left our program. They enter our training with an average annual salary of \$14,000 and are making \$39,000 two years later.

"Women who graduate from our program create three jobs on average. For this reason alone, microenterprise needs to be a priority in 2011."



Kristin Johnson
 Northern California SBDC

"Our focus in 2011 is on technology innovation, international trade, 'Green' business issues and government procurement.

"We're still seeing businesses struggling but they're hanging in there and sticking with our counseling and consulting support.

"A small businesses can always use the help of a good lawyer and an accountant. To succeed, they also need a good business advisor."